THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

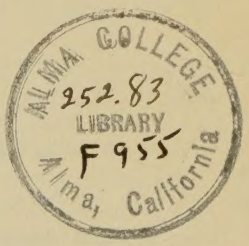
EXPLAINED IN SERMONS

A COURSE OF SEVEN LENTEN SERMONS, INCLUDING
A SERMON FOR GOOD FRIDAY

AND

ELEVEN SERMONS ON THE SACRED HEART

BY THE
REV. J. FUHLROTT



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CONTENTS.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

		PAGE
I.	The necessity of a sacrifice worthy of God	1
II.	Jesus Christ the worthy sacrifice of the New Law	5
III.	The necessity and the nature of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass	11
IV.	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the most glorious sacrifice	16
V.	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the most efficient sacrifice	21
VI.	The perpetual celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass	27
VII.	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass a renewal of the bloody sacrifice on the cross. (Sermon for Good Friday)	32

SERMONS ON THE SACRED HEART.

I.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus the most worthy object of adoration and love	1
II.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the book of the elect, in which the whole sum and substance of our knowledge and reflection is contained	7
III.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus appears burning, so as to inflame our hearts anew with love for the Holy Eucharist and the Sacred Passion	12
IV.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus a mirror of every virtue	17
V.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus begins even at His birth the work of our Redemption	21
VI.	The Divine Heart of Jesus a morning offering to the Father for the sins of the world	24
VII.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus the most obedient of all	28
VIII.	The Divine Heart of Jesus, although exceedingly meek, is very zealous for the honor of the Heavenly Father	32
IX.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus exceedingly rich in mercy	36
X.	The Sacred Heart of Jesus a well of living waters, in which the sinful soul finds grace and salvation	40
XI.	I am the Door: if any one enters by Me, he shall be saved	44

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

A COURSE OF SEVEN LENTEN SERMONS.

I. The Necessity of a Sacrifice Worthy of God.

"A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit."—Ps. l. 19.

The holy season of Lent which has just begun, should be an occasion for us to think oftener and more seriously than ordinarily of the salvation of our soul. For this reason Holy Church offers us more frequent opportunities than at any other time of the year, by impressive services and sermons, to think over the great truths, which should in particular impel and move us to care for the salvation of our soul. There is, however, no other means of salvation, which exerts such power in the Christian life, and which is more adapted, if properly understood and brought into daily life, to unite man and his heart with God, to take him away from every-day worldly life, and lead him to God, than the doctrine of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. The Blessed Sacrament is not only the source from whence all the graces of salvation flow to us, but it is the center of our whole spiritual life, from the cradle to the grave, and it is the center of the whole Catholic worship of God.

We know that to honor and to love Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar should be our joy and happiness: the worship of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist gives us blessing and happiness for body and soul, consolation and strength in life and death.

With the help of God we will take for our Lenten consideration this year the doctrine of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar; namely, the *Catholic teaching of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.*

So as to properly understand and comprehend the teaching of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, my dear brethren, we must know beforehand first of all what we are to understand by a sacrifice, and we must learn that man is required to offer to God an agreeable sacrifice. Let this therefore be the object of our con-

templation to-day, and we will consider: (1) *What is understood by sacrifice,* and (2) *the necessity of a sacrifice worthy of God.*

1. The word "sacrifice," from *"sacer,"* sacred, and *"facere"* to make, means to offer to Heaven, that is to say: to present, to offer, to give. Sacrifice is therefore a gift presented by man to God. Certainly God is the Lord and ruler of every creature; and we might ask the question: What has man that he can offer to God? God has, however, given man a certain authority to govern himself, and power over all creatures. When, then, man offers a gift to God, he acknowledges thereby the supremacy of God over man and over all creatures. This is the very essence and nature of worship. Sacrifice forms, therefore, naturally the center of divine service in every religion. It is a necessity for man to express his religious sentiments; to give outward and actual expression to the consciousness of his allegiance to God. Therefore, sacrifice is as ancient as the history of man. Already in paradise before sin, it was man's solemn duty to show his absolute submission to God, by voluntary and perfect obedience. By an absolute submission of his will to God man would have remained united with God.

We know that man in paradise refused this sacrifice of submitting his will to God; he sinned. Even in the state of sin it still remained his duty, as we shall see, to offer sacrifice, as it was still the duty of man to acknowledge and to worship the supreme lordship of God. With this duty was combined from now on that other important task of appeasing an offended God, of calming His wrath; and henceforth every sacrifice assumed the character of an expiatory sacrifice. Man by sinning had deserved death, sinful man deserved death. A respite was, however, granted to him in the meantime, in expectation of the coming Redeemer, but man had to acknowledge and admit that death was the deserved punishment. It was easy for man to see that he must make atonement, and offer an expiation to a degree which he was unable to accomplish himself. He therefore looked about for an object of sacrifice, for a sacrificial gift, to which he might transmit his guilt, and then offer atonement by having it slain, or, as the case may be, destroyed. In this way we arrive at the idea of atonement by proxy, and in this way we also arrive at the right understanding as regards the object of sacrifice.

Sacrifice is the offering up of a material, visible gift, offered to God alone by a lawfully appointed minister, to acknowledge God as

the Supreme Lord, and to propitiate His wrath, and offered by means of sacred rites. We must observe five parts as belonging essentially to the nature of sacrifice:

(*a*) First of all the object of sacrifice must be owned by the one offering the sacrifice; for how could the offer of a gift gain favor from another, when the gift does not in any way belong to me?

(*b*) The object of sacrifice must be something material, something visible. Man consists of body and soul; in all pursuits of the soul the body takes part, therefore it is just and reasonable that the gift, with which man seeks to propitiate an offended God, should be taken from amongst visible things, so that the body might partake therein.

(*c*) After what we have said about sacrifice, it is clear to us that man must offer sacrifice to God alone, the Almighty Lord of all things; of course we can offer to a man, to an earthly lord or king, presents and gifts, but a sacrifice in the right sense of the word can only be offered to the Almighty, to God alone.

(*d*) In such offering we must have the intention of acknowledging the supremacy of God over us, and of striving to appease His outraged majesty.

(*e*) From the foregoing points it appears that by offering up of a sacrifice the object is to reconcile two estranged parties. For this reason a mediator is necessary, who is acceptable to both parties, who intercedes for the one party and receives the gift from the other; he is the lawfully appointed minister, through whom the sacrifice is offered; and thus we come to the mediating priesthood, which is an essential condition in the service of sacrifice.

2. Now we may ask: Is such a sacrifice necessary? Is it necessary that man should offer to God, his almighty Lord, visible gifts, or cause them to be offered to Him, thereby to acknowledge Him as his Master, and to appease His outraged majesty? Without hesitation we must anwer: A sacrifice is necessary; we must make a sacrifice to God, for we are His debtors, and we must wipe out our indebtedness if possible. We are guilty before God in a multitude of ways.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth"—this is how we begin our profession of faith. God therefore is our Lord; from Him we have our being; without Him we should not be; therefore to Him is due our entire devotion, our

absolute obedience, and we should disregard our position as created beings, by neglecting to acknowledge our dependence upon God, and give outward expression to our submission to Him.

We are debtors to God! O what precious goods have we received from our Lord! The life of the body, the life of the soul, the faculties and strength of the body as well as of the soul; are they not all gifts and presents from God? "What hast thou, O man," says therefore the apostle very truly, "which thou didst not receive?" Certainly, dear brethren, if we wished to enumerate all the benefits which we have received from God for soul and body, we should not know where to begin or where to leave off; with feelings of the most profound humility and gratitude we should say with the Psalmist: "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?" (Ps. cxv., 12). Ask yourselves, dear brethren, whether there would be a spark of gratitude in us if we did not feel a desire to offer to God, the Giver of all good gifts, frequently and willing a sacrifice of thanksgiving?

We are debtors to God. Let us suppose, if that were possible, that God would withdraw Himself from us for one hour, that He would refuse us His help, would take away from us His saving, protecting and blessing hand: what would become of us?

Yes, indeed, we are dependent upon God every moment of our lives; every moment brings with it fresh benefits from God for us; we could not exist if we did not continually receive God's assistance and blessing. Every day we come to God with different requests and prayers: what is more natural, what is more self-evident than that we should accompany our petitions with a gift pleasing to God!

We are debtors to God. O what have we done? We knew His will and we have not complied with it; we knew His commandments, and how have we behaved toward Him; we called Him our Master, and yet we did not serve Him; we received His benefits, and then we grieved and offended Him! We have sinned, and thereby merited His wrath and His chastisement. How can we make amends for all this? All nations acknowledge that man must offer sacrifice to the Highest Being, and they all have introduced sacrifice in the worship of God; even the heathen, though misguided in the choice of their sacrifice, and in the manner of offering it, yet they all introduced the practice of it. Man is a debtor to God, and we must strive as much as possible to pay this debt, and

for this purpose sacrifice is necessary; a religion therefore without sacrifice is not conceivable. For this reason, God, who wished to bring up the people of Israel as His people, in whom He wished to preserve the true religion and the belief in the one true God, ordered them to offer a sacrifice to God: a sacrifice of thanksgiving, a sacrifice of prayer, and a sacrifice of praise, and He instructed this people carefully as to the season, and number, and manner of offering of sacrifices. We certainly must conclude that: If God did not allow the prescribed sacrifice of the old law to remain, but, on the contrary, abolished it, it does not mean that the new, perfect law, whose founder and center is the incarnate Son of God Himself, should be without sacrifice. No; on the contrary, we may, and we ought to, conclude from this, that God has enabled man to offer a more perfect, and worthy sacrifice, under the new law.

The sacrifices of the old law were, as the Apostle St. Paul says justly, insignificant, imperfect in substance, and only of value by the intention offered with them. What does miserable man possess that he could offer as a commensurate sacrifice to Almighty God? The holiest and most perfect man, even the pure spirits in heaven were not precious enough nor worthy to be offered up to God as an efficient sacrifice. For this reason the Son of God Himself became our sacrifice. He willed to take the guilt and the obligations of mankind upon Himself, and placed His divine Person, through taking unto Himself our human nature, in a position to fulfill all our obligations toward God. God therefore Himself gave to man, who stood in such great need of it, a sacrifice worthy of God, of which St. John writes in his revelation: "This is the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world" (Apoc. xiii. 8). Amen.

II. Jesus Christ the Worthy Sacrifice of the New Law.

"Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God, for an odor of sweetness" (Eph. v. 2).

Man did not submit his will entirely to the will of his Creator in the state of innocence, still less did he do so in the state of sin. It was necessary that man should offer this obedience to God. Man owed to God, his Lord and Creator, a sacrifice. This necessity of a sacrifice has been recognized by all people, at all times. There has

never been, therefore, a single race in the history of man which has not introduced sacrifices in its religious worship. For the people of Israel, which God raised up to be His people, so as to preserve in it the belief in the one true God, He Himself ordained sacrifice. The sacrifice of the old law consisted, according to Mosaic law, of bloody and unbloody offerings, which were intended to inculcate the consciousness upon this people, that God was their only and greatest Master, to whom they owed everything, and whom, therefore, they should honor in the highest degree. Furthermore, this sacrifice, especially the sacrifice of atonement, should preserve among the people the consciousness of sins committed, and of the heavy weight of guilt which burdened man, and which must be wiped out, and which would be expiated one day by the promised Redeemer of the world.

Certainly neither this sacrifice of the Jews, still less the various and often sinful sacrifices of the heathen, could suffice to the Almighty for the past sins and offenses of mankind, and He to whom everything belongs could not be propitiated by any of these sacrificial offerings. To perfect the new law, founded by the Son of God Himself, and in which from the beginning the promised Redeemer was to accomplish the work of redemption, God willed to create for man a better, a more perfect sacrifice—a sacrifice which would be sufficient to afford Him complete satisfaction, and in which man might acknowledge his submission and allegiance in the most perfect way.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God Himself, became this perfect sacrifice of the new law, the promised Redeemer, and this sacrifice shall be the object of our consideration to-day, in which we should consider:

I. Christ as a sacrifice by His will.
II. Christ as a sacrifice by His teaching and His deeds.
III. Christ as a sacrifice by His death upon the cross.

The third point we will omit, on account of its great importance, from our meditation to-day, and reserve the same for our special consideration on Good-Friday evening.

I. The sacrifices of the Israelites, which God had prescribed for them through Moses, had a proper intention, and a profound meaning, but the Israelites did not, as they were told many times by their own prophets, augment that sacrifice by its most important ingredient, *i.e.*, with leading a pure and spotless life.

They believed that they had bought the favor of the Almighty with

their outward oblations, and had made sufficient satisfaction to God for their sins. For this reason God told them through His prophets: "I will not take calves out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy flocks" (Ps. xlix. 9); "for I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than holocausts" (Osee vi. 6), and so Jesus came and was the "end of the law" (Rom. x. 4); and by His bloody death offered once and forever the worthy and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of men, and brought about the "adoration of God in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24).

If we look up the writings of the New Testament, we find it repeatedly stated, that it is the duty of man to offer sacrifice to God, that he must love God alone, serve Him and obey Him, and consecrate to Him alone all the faculties of his mind and body. (Rom. xii. 1; Heb. xiii. 15, 16; Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). Jesus Christ came to offer this sacrifice to God, and to teach men anew how they could offer it themselves, and to entirely and perfectly submit His will to the will of His Heavenly Father as the Psalmist said of Him beforehand: "Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire; burnt-offering and sin-offering thou didst not require. Then said I: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart" (Ps. xxxix). How perfectly did Jesus Christ solve this problem and sacrifice His will! From that solemn moment in the simple room of the Virgin Mary at Nazareth, in which she said, "Be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke i. 38), at which moment the Son of God became man, according to the will of His Heavenly Father; until that awful moment in the garden of Gethsemani, in which the Lord Jesus Christ, recognizing the difficulties and the bitterness of this sacrifice of the will, exclaimed, His forehead covered with a bloody sweat: "Father, not my will, but thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42). His whole life of thirty-three long years was an uninterrupted sacrifice of the will, an uninterrupted obedience to God His Heavenly Father. No sooner had Jesus reached the age at which the ordinary child begins to use its reason, than He commenced to overcome His human feelings, His attachment to His parents. He parted from His dear parents, and said in the temple at Jerusalem: "Did you not know, that I must be about the things that are my Father's?" (Luke ii. 49). Although He was the Son of God, and equal to the Heavenly Father in eternity, power, holiness, and perfection, yet

He submitted His human will to the will of His Father in heaven, as He said Himself: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John vi. 38). The accomplishment of His Heavenly Father's will was all in all to Him; for its sake He forgot to eat and drink. On one occasion, tired after a journey, He sat down at Jacob's well. His disciples had gone to the nearest town to bring food and drink. Meantime the Samaritan woman approached Him, and He instructed her about the kingdom of God. The disciples, returning, invited their Master to eat, but He spoke these memorable words: "I have meat to eat which you know not: my meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John iv. 32-34). Look, dear brethren, at this perfect submission of His own will, the complete surrender of His will to the will of the Almighty, the most perfect sacrifice of His will, although His entire life, from His conception, from His birth in the stable until the agony in the Garden of Olives, "obedient in all things, obedient even unto death" (Phil. ii. 8). Truly, it was a sacrifice worthy of God; it could be, and it must be, acceptable to Him. The first creatures had denied Him the obedience which was His due; their descendants were just as wicked and refused God the obedience due to Him; and so men went on, and they will never cease to refuse God their obedience. Through this perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, all man's disobedience, from the very first until the last was expiated; the wrath of God is now propitiated, and He turns a friendly countenance toward His children. He pardons them, and gives them His grace and His blessing, on account of the obedience of the Redeemer.

II. As Christ made a sacrifice of His will to propitiate the Almighty for man's refusing his obedience, He was also, by His teaching and His life, the most perfect sacrifice for men; for by His teaching and His actions, He showed man how from henceforth God must be acknowledged as the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, and how all men and all nations must serve the true God alone, and, indeed, they must serve Him and adore Him "in spirit and in truth." This is the purport of His teaching, and that is the aim of His work, that man may find again the right way to God, and may return to his proper relationship with God. For this reason he founded a kingdom of God upon earth, Christendom, which should be a port of salvation and a place of expiation for all men who would be taken into it. Christ is the high priest of this exalted new kingdom, who spent His entire pure life as Mediator be-

tween God and man. Through Him alone—this is His teaching—can we come to the Father in heaven; through Him alone can man be saved (John vi. 44, 66; John x. 7, 9; John xiv. 6, 7; Acts iv. 12). "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24).

The life of Jesus, therefore, was a life of incessant privation and renunciation, of poverty, by being stripped even of the most necessary things, so that He could say of Himself: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. viii. 20). Thereby He has taught men to bear poverty for the love of God, and to become poor for the love of God, to renounce property and fortune, wealth and pleasures, so as to honor the Giver of all good gifts. Hence His teaching: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and follow me" (Matt. xix. 21). Christ is the sacrifice of peace. Who could fill in the unfathomable breach, which sin had caused, between the Creator and the creature; who could equalize the dreadful disorder into which the creature had fallen, with its Creator, if Christ had not given Himself as a peace offering, whom the prophet proclaimed beforehand as our Prince of Peace (Is. ix. 6), whose birth was announced by the angels in songs of peace: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii. 14), and He introduces Himself as our peacemaker with these words: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John xiv. 27).

Christ is the sacrifice of freedom. Ah, how disgraceful was the condition of slavery in which mankind lay imprisoned, on account of sin! Man's thoughts and wishes, his actions and undertakings were influenced and hindered by the law of his sinful flesh; we sighed under the dominion of the prince of darkness, as the apostle says: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John viii. 34). Christ snapped these fetters asunder; Christ despoiled Satan of his dominion over us; Christ offered Himself up as a sacrifice, and has made us really free (John viii. 36). Christ has become the sacrifice for our temporal welfare. Who could count all the sufferings and troubles and afflictions which would have overtaken mankind in consequence of sin, and who could give man the courage and strength to bear them all, to endure all, the sicknesses, and the visitations of sorrow, if Christ had not made Himself a sac-

rifice for us, and declared: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28).

Christ became a sacrifice of love. Men were the children of God from the beginning, and it was their destiny to be, and to remain eternally the children of God. But alas! what strife and what enmity, what quarrels and what hatred had sprung up between God and man, and between man and man! Christ shows us by His example and teaches us by His word, how we can again look upon God as our Father, and how we should love Him; He shows us by His example, and teaches us by His word, how we are to love one another, and to regard one another as children of the one Father. He makes it a condition of belonging to His kingdom, that we have "love one for another" (John xiii. 35).

Christ has made Himself the sacrifice of our lives. O how bitter was death, the hardest and the last of the temporal punishments for sin! Christ, the Lord over life and death, took away the sting of death. He raised many dead to life again while He was upon earth; He restored health to many sick persons who were near death, and taught them that death is only a sleep, a passing over to a better life without sorrow. Blest with this conviction, the holy Simeon wished to die (Luke ii. 29), and the Apostle Paul cried out, inspired: "To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. i. 21).

Dear brethren, we have in Christianity, in the kingdom of grace and reconciliation, a sacrifice worthy of God, a complete sacrifice. Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins, loaded Himself with our guilt, bore for us suffering and sorrow, persecution, hatred and even death itself. "It behooved him in all things to be made like to his brethren" (Heb. ii. 17). In all things He offers Himself to God as a sacrifice, so as to discharge our burden, to exalt us, to sanctify us, and to be our reconciliation. "Christ is our advocate with the Father, and not for us only, but for the whole world" (I. John ii. 1, 2).

Let us, my dear brethren, acknowledge with gratitude and emotion, what the apostle says: "That, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works" (Titus ii. 12-14). Amen.

III. The Necessity and the Nature of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world."—John vi. 52.

Jesus Christ is, in His person, and in His life and conduct here upon earth, an historical character, separated from us by space and time. His work of redemption, His life and death of sacrifice, is of itself and in itself a complete fact. If we stopped at this idea we should have no other association with the historical Redeemer who died upon the cross, than we should have with any other historical character of antiquity, and the work of redemption itself would be simply an historical fact; the acquisition of the redemption would consequently be nothing else than a remembrance, just as we acquire historical facts by tradition. This is the Protestant standpoint, and that is the reason why the Protestant can not grasp the thought that Christ continues to live in His person and in His works in the visible Church. They can not comprehend that Christ is really present in the Holy Eucharist, but they only acknowledge Christ present therein figuratively, as a token, as a remembrance. How different is our Catholic view and conviction! We believe in a real communion of man with Christ; we know that we who are living are united with the living Christ; we know and believe that the living Christ is present in our midst. We are consequently not satisfied with merely an historical Christ, nor with an historically consummated redemption, but we require that the past should become the present; that the sacrifice of Golgotha should be a continuous and ever present sacrifice whose fruits we can acquire at all times.

We know from our Holy Faith of Christ's presence in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Our expectations of a continual ever-present sacrifice is accomplished by the Holy Eucharist, the most Holy Sacrament of the altar, as a sacrifice. We will consider to-day briefly:

I.—How necessary this Eucharistic sacrifice is.
II.—Why it is a real sacrifice worthy of God.

I.

From what has been already said we know that the sacrifice accomplished by Jesus Christ is not sufficient for us; that we must have a sacrifice continually present with us, in which we can take part. If we could have seen the sacrifice of the life of Jesus, and lived through it, and if we could have united our good works with His, and have begged Him to let us take part in His works of sacrifice; if we could really have seen His blood flowing, and have been able to beseech Him upon our knees that He might offer one drop thereof to the heavenly Father as a propitiation for our sins and guilt, then we should have certainly been happy and contented. Instead of this, it is nearly two thousand years since Christ Himself offered up this all-sufficing sacrifice. Christ has returned to God the Father in heaven, and sits at His right hand. Our participation in the sacrifice of Jesus is wanting. The fruits of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ are the merits of Christ, the grace which justifies and sanctifies us. We must take part in this grace of justification; the work of the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ must be executed in every single person just as much as it was accomplished at that time. This takes place in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which, as we shall see, renews perpetually by a living and constant activity, the sacrifice of the cross in its entirety, divested only of its limits of time and space, in the Church founded by Christ. In the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, Christ has left Himself and His entire work, all the fruits and merits of His actions, as a sacred legacy to His Church, and through her to all mankind for their perpetual use.

In many parts of the Old Testament the treasure of grace which Christ has merited for us by His work of sacrifice, is represented to us by the symbol of flowing waters. These waters of salvation are, by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, coming to mankind as from a well dug at the foot of the cross on Calvary. By the institution of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Lord has formed these waters into a running, living stream, the well has become a stream of living waters, flowing abundantly in all directions. Each celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, every offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is a fresh bubbling-up, an outpouring of the source of salvation, whereby the water of salvation is brought near to us, and placed within our reach. But even this does not quench our thirst. We must approach this well of life, and drink of the same in reality.

The Sacraments are the channels through which this saving drink is brought to us. The Holy Eucharist is the principal channel, for it supplies us with this water of salvation in abundance, without the source ever becoming exhausted.

We see, dearly beloved, that the historical fact of Christ's life and death of atonement is not sufficient for us. Christ must live on in His person as well as in His sacrifice. He must be present with us, as long as we stand in need of sanctification and reconciliation with God. It is in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that this need is realized.

II.

Now we ask the question: Is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass a real, true sacrifice? We shall find that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is really a true sacrifice, if we consider the institution of the same, and compare the attributes of a sacrifice with it.

In that solemn evening hour when Christ ate the Paschal lamb with His disciples, before He went to His death, He founded the Church of salvation, He erected the altar upon which the true sacrifice of atonement of the New Law was then offered, and should be offered up daily for us to the heavenly Father. This is the reason He desired so ardently for this hour, as He Himself declares: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." (Luke xxii. 15.) "And taking bread, He gave thanks, and brake, and gave them, saying: This is my body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you." (Matt. xxvi; Luke xxii.) "Do this in commemoration of me."

This is the institution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in a few brief words, and at the same time the first offering up of the same, as well as the manifestation of the will of Jesus that it should from now on be continually repeated in His Church. Let us observe well: "The body which shall be given—the blood which shall be shed." This can have no other meaning or significance than: This is my body which will be given for the atonement of the sins of men, and this is my blood which flows for the forgiveness of the sins of men. His body is, therefore, a true body of sacrifice, His blood is really a blood of sacrifice. Very important for the understanding of the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice, is this expression of our Lord's: "This is

the chalice, the new testament in my blood." The new law is just as distinguishable by the blood which flows, as the old law, and the new law is just as fulfilled in blood as the old law, only not by the blood of goats and oxen, but by the blood of the Lord. That blood is, therefore, here as well as there, a blood of sacrifice; here as there we have a sacrifice of the law.

This sacrifice, which Christ offered up for the first time, shall continue for ever: "Do this for a commemoration of me." As Christ offered sacrifice, so were the Apostles obliged and authorized to offer the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. With the sacrifice Christ, therefore, erected the temple of sacrifice, the Holy Church, on that memorable evening before He went to suffer, and He placed therein the priesthood, because where there is sacrifice, there must also be priests. For this reason the Council of Trent affirms: "Whosoever supposes that by these words: do this for a commemoration of me, Christ did not institute or ordain the Apostles as priests, that they themselves, and the other priests should offer up His body and His blood, he be excommunicated." Christ, therefore, at the Last Supper, instituted and offered up the sacrifice of the new law. What He gave there was the food of sacrifice, and what He ordained was the command that this sacrifice should be celebrated perpetually.

Let us consider now, how this sacrifice has all the qualities of a true sacrifice. The oblation must be the property of the sacrificer. Christ gives Himself as the oblation, His own flesh, His own blood. Who can contest His right of possession!

The oblation must be something exterior, something visible. Christ explains what He is giving: "This," says He, "that I hold in my hands, which appears to you to be bread, is my flesh; this, that is in the chalice, which appears to you like wine, is my blood." Under the visible forms of bread and wine, Christ offers up His flesh and blood as a sacrifice.

The sacrifice must be offered to God. Before the Lord offered the oblation, "He raised His eyes to heaven and gave thanks"; that is to say, He prayed and blest the bread. There is no doubt that in what He does He is in the most intimate communication with His Father in heaven; what He now does is being done for the glory of His Father in heaven, who sent Him; His flesh and His blood which He gives for the reconciliation of man with God; this He can only offer up to the One who is to be propitiated: the offended and angered God in heaven.

The oblation must be offered up by a mediator; there must be a sacrificing priest. First of all, Christ is Himself the sacrificing priest, because He offers up Himself, His flesh and His blood, and for all time to come He appoints and ordains His Apostles, and those who succeed them in their priestly office, as sacrificing priests, who alone shall have the ability and power to be able to offer up this exalted sacrifice of the new law to the heavenly Father. The oblation must be transformed, it must be destroyed. When the Saviour took bread and wine into His hands, the Apostles only saw bread and wine. No sooner had He spoken that word of command, "This is my flesh, this is my blood," than the bread was changed into His flesh, and the wine was changed into His blood. That which took place at the sacrifice, the separation by force of the blood from the body of the animal sacrificed, we see here represented by the separation of the form of the bread and wine. As in the old law the knife of the priest, in the sacrifice of the cross, the nails and the spear were the instruments for the destruction of the sacrifice, so here the instruments of transubstantiation are the words: This is my body, this is my blood. Finally, the sacrifice must be offered up with the intention of acknowledging God as the mighty Lord of all things. We have already said that the Saviour could have had no other intention at the Last Supper than that of offering Himself as a sacrifice of propitiation, so that the majesty of God which had been offended and grieved by man, might be reconciled again, and the right relations between God and man re-established. We have, then, in the law of perfection, a true and everlasting sacrifice, and this oblation is worthy of God, as clearly appears from the words, "Shed for the remission of sins." Worthy of God is the oblation: the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ Himself. As the Apostle says, "Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed." (I. Cor. v. 7.)

Has there ever been a holier, a purer, or more worthy sacrifice to God?

Worthy of God is the sacrificing priest of this oblation, even Jesus Christ Himself, who is, as the Apostle says, "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily (as the *other* priests) to offer sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's." (Heb. vii. 26.) Those whom the Lord ordains to be in the future the priests of this sacrifice, are only His appointed custodians, His servants, and His representatives.

Worthy of God is the manner of offering this sacrifice, a wonder to men, and a spectacle and wonder to the angels!

O unhappy people who were imprisoned in the darkness of unbelief and paganism, what would have become of you without this one and only sacrifice worthy of God? How could you have made satisfaction for your sins? O fellow men, so greatly to be pitied, who have lost this sacrifice worthy of God, where will you find a substitute to propitiate an offended God, to wipe away your tears, and to receive your sighs?

O how happy are we faithful, believing Catholic Christians to possess upon our altars the only sacrifice worthy of God, which we can every day offer up anew to the offended God as a sacrifice of propitiation, a worthy sacrifice of worship to the Almighty, and as a sacrifice of supplication in all our necessities and calamities!

Let us rejoice at this prerogative and happiness, and let us not cease to venerate it with gratitude! Amen.

IV. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Most Glorious Sacrifice.

"Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to God, for ever and ever."—Apoc. vii. 12.

The relation in which we stand to God, is a relation of the most complete dependence. We have nothing, and can not expect anything but from God. As the Apostle says: "What hast thou, O man, that thou hast not received?" What we have and what we are is a gift and work of God. As, therefore, God gave us everything, it is He, also, who preserves us. If for one moment He would withdraw His gentle, Almighty hand, we should fall back into nothingness, from whence we came. For this reason, it is right and proper that we should acknowledge and serve God as our highest Lord. In the same manner it is our duty to give Him thanks for the graces received. Now, because we are constantly in need of fresh graces and benefits, it is self-evident that we must implore the assistance of God in our necessities. We must pray to Him for new graces. While, moreover, we continually neglect our duties toward God, and offend and exasperate Him by our faults, it is necessary that we should become reconciled to Him again.

The right worship of God has, therefore, the fulfilment of this fourfold indebtedness for its purport and its object: We must worship God as our supreme Lord; we must thank Him for His benefits; we must be reconciled with Him when we have offended Him; we must pray to Him for help in our necessities. The center of all worship of God is sacrifice, as God Himself prescribed for the chosen people of Israel, and, therefore, there were sacrifices of adoration, of propitiation, of thanksgiving, and of supplication. We stand exactly in the same relation of dependence to God, as the chosen people of Israel did, and we have exactly the same obligations toward Him. If, then, God abolished the prescribed sacrifice of the old law, we must have, in the sacrifice of the new law, just as perfect a sacrifice of adoration, a perfect sacrifice of thanksgiving, a perfect sacrifice of propitiation, a perfect sacrifice of supplication. We shall understand this more clearly if we consider the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the most glorious sacrifice offered to God, as the most efficient sacrifice for mankind. To-day we will consider the Holy Sacrifice as the most glorious sacrifice offered to God, and we will contemplate:

I.—How, through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the adoration due to God is rendered.

II.—How the thanksgiving due to God is performed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I.

We have often heard that we men must adore God as our supreme Lord; that we must praise and extol Him. As every other creature is upon earth to increase the honor and glory of God, so much the more must man give honor to God in the most perfect manner. The higher the dignity of the one whom we must honor, so much the more noble and precious must the gift be with which we avow our respect. I can honor a child by presenting it with a picture book or a plaything; the gift with which I wish to honor its parents or guardians must be more valuable. If I desire to do honor to a prominent man, the gift must be still more valuable. A prince must be honored with a princely gift; a king with a royal gift. What gift and reverence is due to God, who is exalted above all kings and princes? A divine gift, a divine honor, a gift and veneration infinitely great, infinitely pure, infinitely precious. We must offer to God a gift and reverence which will give Him infinite satisfaction. But, my dear brethren,

whence shall we attain this? If all the angels and the just were for thousands of years to praise and to extol God unceasingly with the most glorious songs of praise, if all men offered up their lives to adore and reverence God, this would still be far from being the adoration and reverence befitting God, and worthy of Him, for angels and men are only God's creatures, and as nothing in comparison with the infinite majesty of God. Besides, we men are poor sinners, who have offended God, and we must expect God's countenance to be turned away from us, and His arm uplifted in wrath against us, if we should dare to approach Him to adore Him. How, then, can we worship and praise God; with what can we honor Him? Indeed, we are still less able to do this, than the poor steward in the Gospel was to pay his lord the ten thousand talents. (Matt. xviii. 24.) But, dear brethren, as poor as we are, we have become rich through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In Holy Mass, Jesus Christ has given us Himself, as the most exalted and the most perfect oblation, with all His merits. Therewith we can offer to God a reverence befitting Him. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we offer up to the heavenly Father "His only-begotten Son, in whom He is well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17.) All the honor which Jesus Christ once rendered to His heavenly Father by His obedience, by His most pure life, by His fervent prayers, by His fasting, by His suffering and death upon the cross, He renders to Him anew, as often as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is, however, our own sacrifice. Jesus Christ became our brother through His incarnation; He belongs to our family. The praise and the veneration which He offers to His heavenly Father through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is our praise, His obedience is our obedience, His sacrifice of adoration is ours. O how happy we ought to be to have such a sacrifice with which to praise and extol God worthily, and to adore Him; a sacrifice with which, indeed, God is well pleased. Now we can approach God with confidence, and say to Him: Behold, O God, we are poor sinful men, we can not praise, extol, and adore Thee, as we ought to, and in a manner worthy of Thee; but we have Thy only-begotten Son; Thou lovest Him; we offer Him up to Thee: all His love, all His obedience, His prayers, His sufferings, His death. He has given us all these, and we offer them all up to Thee as a sacrifice; accept them as if they were our own.

This is what you can say, dear Christian, at every Mass which you hear devoutly. At every sacrifice of the Mass you can unite your

prayers with the prayers of Jesus, your sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus, your work with the work of Jesus, and you can thus daily offer up to Almighty God in the worthiest and most perfect way, your adoration, your praise, and your obedience, and Almighty God will every time be well pleased with your veneration for the sake of Jesus Christ, His well-beloved Son, with whose sacrifice you unite your own, and who gives Himself as a sacrifice for you.

II.

Gratitude is one of the most natural obligations. He who receives benefits must acknowledge the same, and strive as far as possible to return them, and make them good through love and high esteem for the benefactor. Who can enumerate the benefits which we have received from God? Where should we begin, and where leave off if we had to name all the gifts which God has given us for body and soul? Life, health, bodily strength, ability for our vocation, and all things, from the smallest to the greatest, which are necessary to preserve these gifts, are so many gifts and benefits from God. The endless number of spiritual graces and benefits, beginning with holy baptism, whereby we become children of God, and heirs of heaven, until the last helps of grace on our deathbed, are just so many presents from God, of which each separate one is infinitely more precious than all the possessions and wealth of this world. Verily, my dear brethren, we could sooner count the stars of heaven, and the drops of the ocean, than the benefits which God has conferred upon man. Without doubt, it is our duty to be grateful, to give befitting thanks; for not only does the duty of gratitude lie deeply grounded in our natural sentiments, but Holy Writ, both in the old and new Testaments, gives us numberless examples and exhorts us by the most touching admonitions to the fulfilment of this obligation. Already the first son of the first parents offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God (Gen. iv. 3); the Patriarch Jacob made an altar to God, and offered up a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Gen. xxxv. 3); Noe built an altar and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for their preservation from the flood (Gen. viii. 20). There are numberless instances in Holy Scripture where thanks are returned to God for benefits received. "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the most High." (Ps. lix. 14.) "The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me; and there is the way by which I will show him the

salvation of God." (Ps. xlix. 23.) "Give glory to the Lord, for he is good." (Ps. cvi. 1; cxvii. 1; cxxxv. 1.) "Giving thanks always for all things," exhorts the Apostle. (Eph. v. 20.) "In all things, give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all." (I Thess. v. 18.) But how can we give proper thanks; with what shall we prove our gratitude? We are confused, and must cry out with the Psalmist: "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?" (Ps. cxv. 12.) When the young Tobias returned safely to his father's house, after having completed the difficult journey under the guidance of the stranger, he told his father of the numerous and great favors which the youth had rendered him. Then Tobias called his son, and said to him: "What can we give this holy man?" Tobias, the son, answered, and said to his father: "Father, what wages shall you give him? or what can be worthy of his benefits?" (Tob. xii. 1-3.) We are just as much embarrassed how to return thanks, when we reflect upon all the benefits which we have received from God Almighty, and we ask ourselves: "What can we give Him as a deserving recompense for His benefits?" What we have is very little, and what we have already belongs to Him. Here Jesus Christ comes to our assistance, as in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass He becomes our most perfect sacrifice of thanksgiving. When He instituted it the evening before His passion, He raised His eyes to heaven, and gave thanks. (Matt. xxvi. 27.) He instituted, therefore, this sacrifice as a sacrifice of thanksgiving; and as He gave thanks then, so does He give thanks through this sacrifice, and at every celebration of the Mass. We have, therefore, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, something which is of as much value as all the benefits of God to soul and body. We can say to the heavenly Father at every Mass at which we assist with devotion: "We have indeed nothing, O my God, that we can give Thee for all the good which Thou hast given us: We have nothing, and what we call our own belongs to Thee already; but behold here upon the altar Thy beloved Son. He thanks Thee for us. He offers Thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving for us. All His merits, all His thanksgivings which He offered Thee during His entire life upon earth, and which He now offers Thee, we offer them all up to Thee. Accept them as our thanksgiving. With this exalted thanks we unite our insignificant thanks for all the good which Thou hast given us."

O how happy, as I said before, how happy are we Catholic Chris-

tians in possessing in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the most sublime sacrifice of adoration, and an all-sufficient sacrifice of thanksgiving, a sacrifice that in every respect is the most glorious sacrifice to God, and places us in the position of being able to offer to God what is befitting Him, what is worthy of Him!

Let us rejoice, dear brethren, at this, our treasure, and let us make the best possible use of it. We know that the angels in heaven sing unceasingly to God Almighty, "Holy, Holy, Holy!" and they praise, extol, and adore Him through all eternity. We can praise and adore Almighty God in a much worthier manner. The angels and saints are only creatures of God, but in the sacrifice of the Mass it is the Son of God Himself who adores with us, and for us. Daily and hourly we enjoy new benefits from God. Should we not, therefore, thank Almighty God for them, daily and hourly? O let us make a constant use of the infinitely rich treasure of the inexhaustible capital of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to the honor and glory of God! The slothful servant in the Gospel was severely punished for having hidden his talent in the earth, which the Lord had given him, and of letting it lie idle. (Matt. xxv. 24-28.) What punishment shall we receive if, through slothfulness, we let this infinitely precious treasure of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass remain unused? O no, dear brethren, as often as possible we will bear the angels company who surround the altar during Holy Mass. We will prostrate ourselves with them before the exalted throne, and adore the Son of God present, and with them will sing this song of praise: "Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength to God, for ever and ever." Amen.

V. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Most Efficient Sacrifice for Mankind.

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."—Matt. xxvi. 28.

In the preceding instruction we learned that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most glorious oblation offered to God, and we found that we were happy in possessing in the Holy Mass a sacrifice through which we could offer daily to Almighty God the most sublime sacrifice

of adoration, and an all-sufficient sacrifice of thanksgiving. Let us consider the same to-day as the most efficient sacrifice for mankind, and let us meditate for our edification:

I.—How through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the justice of God is propitiated.

II.—How through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass our supplications are granted.

I.

We have repeatedly mentioned in the course of these considerations that we carry within us the conviction, which we can not deny, that we are sinners. We come into the world sin-laden, as the Psalmist openly confesses: "For behold, I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me." (Ps. l. 7.) For this reason it is that we all, without exception, have sinned, and frequently offend God by sin, which is proven by Holy Writ, should any one be bold enough not to admit it. "For all have sinned," says the Apostle Paul, "and do need the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) "If we say that we have no sin," the Apostle John teaches, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John i. 8.) "For there is no just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," it says in the book of Ecclesiastes. (Eccles. vii. 21.) "Who can say," says the wise man, "my heart is clean, I am pure from sin?" (Prov. xx. 9.) If, then, we are sinners, we must take care to become reconciled with the wrathful God; we must make satisfaction to the justice of God, or we shall be lost. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3.) But wherewith shall we propitiate God in His wrath; wherewith shall we make satisfaction to His justice? Sin is an infinitely great evil. It is a disobedience against God, and draws down upon itself the anger and hatred of God. "For their God hateth iniquity" (Judith v. 21): "The sinner hath provoked the Lord" (Ps. ix. 4); "A perverse heart is abominable to the Lord" (Prov. xi. 20); "For the Highest also hateth sinners" (Ecclus. xii. 7). These are so many expressions of Holy Scripture which make known the awful guilt of sin, and its abomination in the sight of God. Sin is, at the same time, the basest ingratitude toward God. An offense, an insult, is the more serious according to the exalted position of the one offended. God is the infinitely perfect being.

He is the highest good, our greatest benefactor, and most loving Father. We have offended Him and grieved Him, we have despised and provoked Him by our sins. Without doubt, then, our guilt is infinitely great. Wherewith can we efface it? Wherewith appease the anger of God? All that we have and can offer to God as a propitiation, is only transient, and of little value. Our guilt is infinite; what we can do in expiation is only insignificant.

God Himself, then, must give us the means of expiation, if we are to be saved. This means is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in which Jesus Christ offers Himself to the heavenly Father, as the most perfect sacrifice of expiation. Alphonsus, a certain prominent man, was with others on board a ship when a terrific storm arose, and they all feared that the ship would surely go down. Then Alphonsus took an innocent child, lifted it up on high, and besought God: "O my God, we indeed are all sinners, and have deserved Thy wrath, and to die. But look upon this child. It is innocent, and Thou lovest it. For the sake of this child, be merciful unto us, and save us." The storm ceased immediately, and all were saved. Dear brethren, in the Holy Mass Jesus Christ Himself is lifted up by the hands of His priest, His flesh and blood cries out to His heavenly Father: "Heavenly Father! man has indeed grievously offended Thee, and has deserved Thy wrath and Thy chastisement, but for My sake, spare him and forgive him. Man has indeed been disobedient, but look upon My obedience unto death, and be appeased. They have merited chastisement, but look on My sufferings, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, My cross, My agonizing death, and for the sake of these, My sufferings, remit to them the punishment." Could the heavenly Father, at this supplication of His Son, at the sight of His passion, which He endured for us, at the sight of the blood which He shed for us, punish us still, and be angry with us? O no, His anger is appeased, His right hand, which was uplifted to punish us, is lowered. He is propitiated, and forgive us our sins, and remits the guilt of our sins for the sake of the blood of His Son, which is offered up in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Therefore, the Apostle Paul says: "For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, by the Holy Ghost, offered Himself unspotted to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 13.) That this cleansing, sin-effacing blood of Christ is present upon the Altar at every Holy Mass,

and is offered up for our sins, we know from the words of our Lord at its institution: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 28.) Our Saviour fulfils here the prayer of the high priest which He made before His passion: "And for them I do sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." (John xvii. 19.) Surely the heavenly Father can not remain unmoved at this touching supplication of His Son's. He can no longer hurl the lightning of His wrath against those who are marked with the blood of His only-begotten Son! When the Lord led His well-beloved people out of the servitude of the Egyptians, He slew, the night before, every first-born son of the Egyptians, and commanded the Israelites to kill a lamb and to eat it, and ordered that they should smear the posts and the threshold of the doors with its blood. "And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be: and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I shall strike the land of Egypt." (II. Mos. xii. 13.) The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the true Paschal lamb, slaughtered for our deliverance from the thraldom of Satan. If our souls are marked with the blood of this lamb of God, then the destructive plague of eternal chastisement for sin will not overtake us. Dear brethren, "there is at Jerusalem a pond *called* Probatica, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water. And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond, after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under." (John v. 2-4.) Behold, here in the Holy Mass is that supernatural well of salvation in the blood of the Lamb of God. Anyone can plunge himself into this salutary pool at all times of the day, and in every place this Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered up, and a single drop of the well of salvation, the precious blood of Jesus, is sufficient to cleanse and to cure all the sicknesses and imperfections of our soul. O miraculous sacrifice of the new law, O expiatory blood of the Lamb of God, which takes away our sins, how can we adequately praise Thee, how can we celebrate Thee worthily enough, or can we assist at the same with sufficient joy and humility? O let us never assist at Holy Mass without acknowledging our guilt; without the most profound humility; without the most sincere repentance for our sins, for which

it is offered up as a sacrifice of expiation. Let us imagine to ourselves at every Holy Mass which we assist at, that we are standing under the cross of the dying Saviour, and let us strike our breast with those who stand there. (Luke xxiii. 48.) Let us, at every Mass which we hear, behave as the publican in the Temple at Jerusalem did, and strike our breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke xviii. 13.)

II.

We have, in the course of these considerations, been reminded that we are dependent upon the goodness and mercy of God, every day, every hour, and every moment. It is not sufficient that God has given us life, health, strength of mind and of body; He must preserve them. Every day—hourly, we have fresh wants. We could not live; we should sink into nothing, if God in His goodness did not assist us every moment. Now, God is not obliged to dispense to us His gifts, to help us in our need. It is pure love and pity on His part when He gives us anything. It is our duty and obligation, therefore, to beseech God for His assistance and His gifts, through which we acknowledge and venerate Him as the giver of all good. We can, indeed, call upon God, and ask Him for His gifts, in every place, and at all times; and He vouchsafes to hear our prayer as He has promised us by His Psalmist: "And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Ps. xlix. 15.) But what are our petitions to the Infinite One, the petitions of poor sinners to a provoked and offended God? Ought we not be afraid that in most cases our petitions do not penetrate to the throne of the Almighty, that our prayers will remain unnoticed. Here again, Jesus Christ comes to the assistance of our poverty and weakness. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, He presents Himself to us with all His merits, and gives to His heavenly Father a sacrifice of supplication, infinitely holy and exalted. He Himself, the well-beloved Son, petitions His heavenly Father for us. He prays with the same obedience and with the same abasement and humiliation as He prayed once in the Garden of Gethsemani. He prays for us with the same intense fervor with which He supplicated the Father, when He was dying upon the cross. He prays with the voice of His five sacred wounds, which He has preserved for our consolation. He prays with the voice of His precious blood which He shed for us. He prays with

the voice of His infinite merits, which He acquired by the work of His redemption. Do you think, dear brethren, that the heavenly Father will be deaf and inattentive to the supplicating voice of His well-beloved Son? No, indeed; the voice of the precious blood of Jesus, the voice of His five sacred wounds, the voice of His infinite merits, pierces the Father's heart, and inclines it to listen to the prayers, to regard the petitions which are represented to Him by such a voice. At every Holy Mass at which we assist devoutly, Jesus Christ speaks to His heavenly Father: "Behold, Father, these people ask for Thy grace. Although they are not worthy to be heard, I beg of Thee grant them that which they ask for, for My sake, on account of My passion, My obedience, My wounds, and My blood." At every Holy Mass at which you assist devoutly, dear Christian, you can speak thus to the heavenly Father: "Behold here, O God, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ. He is mine, He is my brother. I present Him to Thee. I offer Him up to Thee as an acceptable sacrifice, with all His infinite merits. Hear my prayer, and grant me Thy grace." Surely, dear brethren, we now understand the truth, the meaning, and the consoling purport of those words of our Saviour's: "Amen, amen, I say to you. If you ask the Father anything in My name, he will give it you." (John xvi. 23.) No, we need have no fear now, that our prayers will remain unheard, if we come with such a gift, such an infinitely valuable and pleasing present; if we offer to the eternal Father His well-beloved Son, the most dear to Him, as a present, and pray to Him thus. No, He can not refuse us. If the only-begotten Son Himself prays for us to His Father, He who has promised that all things will be accorded to us that we ask for in His name, then we are sure and certain that all our prayers will be heard.

O come, therefore, come all, come daily to this living well of salvation, and let each one draw therefrom according to his wants. In every Church this well is to be found; it is open to us every day, it contains always living waters in abundance. Come, then, and draw therefrom! If you are sick, or have a sick one at home, this is the sacred pool of Bethsaida. Are you fearful on account of your sins, here is the pool of Silo, in which souls are washed and cleansed from their leprosy. If you are poor, and are in want of many things, here is the source of wealth and every good; here is sacrificed that One who has said: "Ask, and it shall be given you." (Matt. vii. 7.) If you are afraid of death, here is the source of life, and "whosoever drinketh of this water, shall live forever." (John iv. 14.) Amen.

VI. The Perpetual Celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"For, from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation."—(Malach. i. 11.)

In the course of these instructions on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we repeatedly said that: "Sacrifice was known to all people as a necessary element; indeed, even regarded by them as the center of divine worship. There was no religion without sacrifice." We have also again and again expressed our joy that we Christians of the new law possess the most sublime and perfect sacrifice in the Holy Mass. It is well known how the reformers of the sixteenth century maintained that the Christian Church, in the course of centuries, had become greatly degenerated, and that many strange innovations had crept in which were neither ordained by Christ, nor were they known in the time of the Apostles. Among these strange innovations they counted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and they did away with it, by which they made themselves the only people upon earth, and the only religion, without a sacrifice in their divine service.

So as to convince ourselves anew how real our joy is, and how great our happiness in possessing the sublime sacrifice of the Mass, we will to-day consider the history of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and meditate:

I.—How Christ first of all celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

II.—How the Apostles celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

III.—How the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated subsequently.

I.

The clean oblation prophesied by the Prophet Malachias, which should be offered up all over the world from the rising of the sun until its setting, was offered up by Jesus Christ for the first time the evening before His passion, when He offered Himself up to the heavenly Father as a sacrifice, under the substance of bread and wine. What the Lord did on that occasion were the actions of sacrifice as they were performed by the Levites at their sacrifices; the laying on

of hands, prayer, the breaking in pieces of the sacrificial offering, and its distribution among those present. The Lord took the bread and the chalice in His hands; He gave thanks to His heavenly Father with His eyes uplifted to heaven; He broke the bread; He divided what He had in His hands and in the chalice among His Apostles. The words used thereby by the Lord were words and expressions belonging to the sacrifice: "This is my body which shall be delivered for you; this is My blood which shall be shed for you." This can only be understood as a true gift, as a true sacrifice. What the Lord ordained then, was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachias—the institution and authorizing of the everlasting priesthood. The alliance which Christ founded was to be a perpetual one; the blood of the alliance which was offered here should be offered up for evermore as the blood of expiation for sin. For this reason a perpetual priesthood must be established. Therefore, Christ spoke in the authority which was His as the only-begotten Son of the Father, to His Apostles, and, therefore, of course, to all those who would lawfully succeed them in their office: "Do this in commemoration of Me." As Christ was the Saviour and Redeemer not only for His contemporaries, but for the men of all times, so then all the arrangements which He made for the salvation of mankind, were for all times, and for all men. Therefore, the first sacrifice offered and instituted by Him was for all time. The calling of the Apostles to the priesthood, and their authorization, was established, therefore, for all time, and for all men. For all time there had to be priests, who could offer up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted and offered up first of all by Christ.

II.

This is how the Apostles understood the words of the Lord; they acted accordingly, and they celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the Master did, as the history of the Apostles, and the letters of the Apostles testify.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, St. Peter preached publicly "Christ Crucified," and three thousand were converted, and were baptized. The Evangelist, speaking of this, says: "They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii. 42.) The communication of the breaking of bread, and prayer, is none other than that Holy communication which the Lord Himself

celebrated with His Apostles the evening before His passion—the breaking of bread, and prayer. According to the precedent of the Master, the Apostles celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the commencement in a room where all the faithful assembled. When, however, the numbers of the faithful increased, as we have just heard that it did by the thousands, they had to meet in a number of houses. The head of any of the houses where they assembled, was like the pastor of the community. After the bread of sacrifice was broken, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated, they all partook of a meal, at which, as St. Chrysostom tells us, the poor were served before the rich, and the latter were not ashamed to sit down at the same table with them.

The Apostle Paul speaks plainly of an altar of sacrifice: "We have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle." (Heb. xiii. 10.) If the Christians had an altar of sacrifice in the time of the Apostles, they must also have had a sacrifice. It can not mean the Jewish sacrifices, because at the death of Jesus they were abolished, and done away with because they had become purposeless. The sacrifice of the cross was not meant either, because none of it could be eaten. St. Paul can mean no other sacrifice than the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which they celebrated in their assemblies, from which the Jews and the pagans were shut out.

The Apostle Paul had selected his disciple Timothy as his constant companion on his apostolic journeys. When he was consecrated by St. Paul as priest and Bishop of the community of Ephesus, he received from his former master two letters, containing the wisest and most glorious precepts for the management of his episcopal office. In one of the letters (I Tim. ii. 1) St. Paul gives directions on the holding of divine worship in public, and designates the parts thereof: supplications and intercessions, prayers and instructions, and finally thanksgivings. Let us compare these prayers with those used and prescribed in the celebration of Holy Mass, and we shall find that their essence is just the same, and we shall see that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated then according to the directions of the Apostles, as it is now. At Antioch, in the time of the Apostle Paul, there was a flourishing community of Christians, in which there were several priests. The Acts of the Apostles relates of this community (Acts xiii. 2): "And as they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: 'Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them.'" The expression,

"ministering to the Lord," can only mean, according to the Greek text, as they were celebrating the mysteries of religion, as they were offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We also learn from these communications, that the Apostles had already consecrated several priests, who offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, although they were not yet invested with the apostolical office—the episcopal office. At Corinth, too, in the lifetime of the Apostles, a flourishing community of Christians existed. Paul himself had labored there for six months. When he left there and went to Ephesus, all kinds of religious quarrels and jealousies occurred in the community at Corinth. This caused St. Paul to write his first letter to the Corinthians, in which he advises them in their quarrels, and exhorts them to unanimity. In particular, many erroneous ideas had spread concerning the participation in the sacrifices of the Jews and pagans. Paul instructed the Corinthians with impressive severity, that those who took part in pagan worship, sat at the table of Satan, and could have no part in the sacrifices offered up by Christians. "You can not drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of the devils. You can not be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils." (I Cor. x. 20, 21.) This shows us, without any doubt, that at the time of the Apostles there was celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in all Christian communities; that, indeed, it was the center of all religious functions, and that the faithful considered it their duty to be present at it.

III.

It is most instructive, edifying, and interesting to follow the celebration of Holy Mass through the post-apostolic times up to our present day. Going through the history of the centuries, we would gain the conviction that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated at all times, and in all places where the Christian religion was announced. We should learn that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was always considered the acme of Christian religion, the center of Christian worship. We would be edified at the holy zeal with which the faithful took part in this Holy Sacrifice. We should be astonished at the eagerness with which the altars were erected, and the generosity by which they were endowed with the most precious jewels and richest ornaments.

During the first centuries after the apostolic age, when the follow-

ers of Christ were persecuted, and found themselves obliged to celebrate the holy mysteries in secret and hidden places, the mention of them in the writings of the Holy Fathers was more restrained; but we find it confirmed, without any doubt, that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered daily, and that it was offered up for the living as well as for the dead, as a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, propitiation, and supplication.

The Church acquired, after the reign of Constantine the Great, more freedom, and gradually the celebration of Holy Mass became more public, and was surrounded more and more by outward splendor. How convinced the faithful were of the sublimity and immeasurable value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, was proved by the great munificence with which kings and princes presented to the Church all kinds of precious gifts of gold, ivory, pearls, and precious stones, to be used for the erection and ornamentation of altars, upon which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was to be celebrated.

But why further examine the records of history? Let any man who has the inclination, time, and money for this purpose, travel through all parts of the earth; let him visit all the largest cities and the smallest country places. Wherever he goes and finds a Catholic church, he will find therein an altar, or altars, upon which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated. He will find that the prophecy of the prophet Malachias has been fulfilled literally. "For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name oblation." What is it, then, that we have learned in these Lenten discourses about the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? If we had gained by them nothing more than the conviction that by assisting devoutly at a single Mass we offer our Lord more honor and praise than we could do by anything else, I should be more than compensated for my labor.

Yes, my dear friends, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, by which we can please God more, and give Him more praise and honor, than by our devout presence at the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, and, therefore, there is nothing by which we can make God inclined more to be merciful toward us than by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let us, therefore, make the most frequent and the best use of this Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Do not let us neglect this sacred duty at any time when we have a chance to hear Mass, and when we have the happiness of being present at one, let us be most devout and thankful,

But we may consider it as a fruit of our observation, an established fact, that if you will snatch from your labor, your business, or your housework, only a half an hour every morning, for the purpose of hearing Mass, the time will not be lost. If you are in trouble and anxiety, and oppressed by sorrow, go and hear Mass and God will console you. If you are afflicted by sickness, either yourself or in your family, and the doctor has tried his best to help you, in vain, go and hear Mass, and the Lord will hear your prayer, and put an end to that sickness. If you are surrounded by grave dangers and violent temptations to the salvation of your soul, and you feel the strong chains of passion hemming you in on all sides, go and hear Mass, and the Lord will give you strength to break the bondage of your passions, and He will save your soul. If you fear the wrath of God and His punishment on account of the multitude and gravity of your sins, go and hear Mass, and for the sake of His beloved Son, God will be merciful to you, and give you the grace of being converted. Amen.

VII. Sermon for Good Friday.

"It is consummated."—John xix. 30.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass, which, during this holy season of Lent, we have considered as the only perfect sacrifice of the new law, is the perpetual renewal of the bloody sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross, upon which we will meditate to-day. Jesus Christ Himself was the high priest of this tremendous sacrifice, for He, the only begotten Son of God, offered Himself up of His own free will to the heavenly Father; He Himself was the oblation, because He let Himself be put to death for the sins of men like a true Paschal lamb, to propitiate the wrath of the heavenly Father for the sins of men, as foretold of Him by the Prophet Isaias: "He was offered because it was his own will, and was reputed with the wicked, and he hath borne the sins of many." (Is. liii. 7, 12.) And as the Apostle Paul says: "Him, that knew no sin, for us he hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in him." (II. Cor. v. 21.) So, then, after those last words which the dying Redeemer spoke upon the cross, "It is consummated," this great work was accomplished, which could only take place through the cooperation of the justice and mercy of God, as the Psalmist so beautifully expresses it: "Mercy and truth have met each other; justice and

peace have kissed." (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.) Let us consider to-day the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross:

I. *As a sacrifice of divine justice.*
II. *As a sacrifice of divine mercy.*

I. The revolt of mankind against God created such a chasm between God and man that a reunion was not to be thought of; God was so greatly offended and angered by man's disobedience and revolt that it seemed impossible to expect forgiveness and atonement. If a reunion was to be made possible, then, first of all, that chasm must be bridged over; if we could conceive of an atonement and forgiveness on the part of God, then such satisfaction must be made for mankind as would appear all-sufficient in the eyes of the eternal God. This was only possible if God Himself should make satisfaction, for God alone can make atonement to the offended God. Therefore, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, offered Himself as a sacrifice of expiation to the divine justice, and so that His sacrifice should be valid for us He took upon Himself our human nature. As true God He could make an infinitely worthy satisfaction, and as true man He could apply to us men the full value of His satisfaction.

Come, my soul, and let us contemplate the Lamb of God, the only begotten Son of God, laden with the sins of mankind, Himself innocent and sinless, but appearing as culprit before the offended Father. What does the justice of God require of Him? Who can describe all the sorrows and sufferings of body and soul which the Father permitted to overwhelm the Son? He was delivered up to His bitterest enemies, and they exercised their malice upon Him, and heaped upon Him every conceivable suffering, ignominy, and ill-treatment. (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; John xviii. 19; Luke xxiii.) Betrayed by one of His own disciples, denied by the faithful Peter, forsaken by all His disciples, He was condemned to the most disgraceful death, and nailed to the cross between two thieves. The only begotten Son of God hangs there between heaven and earth, His whole body wounded and bruised, His blood streaming from the gaping wounds made by the nails in His hands and feet, mocked at and derided by the gazing multitude, calumniated by those whom He taught so lovingly, to whom He showed so many kindnesses. He suffers such agony, and feels Himself so forsaken and disconsolate, that He cries aloud: "My God, my God, why hast thou for-

saken me?" Behold, is this the well-beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased, whom He now permits to suffer such misery, such distress? Yes, indeed; it is the same well-beloved Son, but this well-beloved Son has taken upon Himself the sins of men, and infinite justice, whose sacrifice He has become of His own free will, requires with inexorable severity complete expiation of the guilt, full satisfaction. This awful justice will not be propitiated until the spotless Paschal lamb is slaughtered, not until the beloved Son has shed the very last drop of His blood, and, dying, cries out: "It is consummated." Yes, now is accomplished the great work of Redemption and of man's deliverance; now is the most complete satisfaction accomplished; now the severe justice of God is appeased; now are the chains burst asunder which held the entire human race in bondage; now the gates of heaven are opened again. The Son of God has sacrificed Himself; men have again become the children of God; the debt is paid; the punishment is remitted.

O my brethren, how must sin appear to the eyes of God, to require such a sacrifice! Truly it must then be "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.) Holy Writ teaches us, that "if God spared not the angels that sinned: but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment" (II. Peter ii. 4), how would the justice of God have visited us and punished us, for it "spared not even his own Son" (Rom. viii. 32), who took upon Himself our sins!

Who is not overwhelmed with fear and anxiety by the consideration of these truths, of the inexorable severity, of the infinite justice of God? Who would not wish to curse sin under the cross of the dying Redeemer, and to swear an undying hatred to everything sinful, and to all things which lead to sin? Who would hesitate for a moment, if burdened with a grievous sin, to partake of the graces of redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross by a sincere confession and repentance? Let us to-day, my dear brethren, unite the most sincere repentance for our sins with the most fervent gratitude to our Redeemer, that He has offered Himself as a sacrifice of justice, and let us acknowledge and confess that if Christ had not died for us upon the cross we should have been delivered over for all eternity to the wrath and chastisements of the just God.

II. What was it then that could have moved the only begotten Son of God to give Himself as a sacrifice of expiation for mankind? What could have induced Him to take our guilt upon Himself? Certainly it was not for his own advantage; His glory and majesty

were not increased. Did we, perhaps, ever do anything to merit that the Son of God should take pity upon us? Oh, no; nothing of the kind. What could have moved the heavenly Father to accept the sacrifice offered by His only begotten Son, to permit such misery and punishment to overwhelm His beloved Son, and what caused Him to accept the satisfaction of His Son as sufficient for us? Ah, dear brethren, we can find no other motive on the part of the Father, or on that of the Son, than the boundless mercy of God, as the Apostle Paul teaches us: "Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." (Titus iii. 5.) And we must therefore, with the Apostle Peter, cry out with grateful hearts: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His great mercy, hath regenerated us unto a lively hope." (I. Peter i. 3.) Jesus Christ therefore has become for our sakes the sacrifice of mercy. He loved us, and "gave himself for our sins." (Gal. i. 4.) Jesus Christ loved us, and therefore He could not see us go to perdition in our sins; He loved us, and therefore He could not behold His heavenly Father angry with us; He loved us, therefore He could not behold us deprived of the blessedness of heaven; He loved us, therefore He could not behold us children of the devil, that we should remain the victims of God's wrath; He loved us, therefore He humbled Himself, that thereby we might be exalted as the children of God; He loved us, therefore He died for us, so that we might receive eternal life and not die an everlasting death; He loved us, therefore He allowed Himself to be bound and fastened to the cross, that we might be liberated from the chains of sin.

Now we can understand, my brethren, why He prayed so fervently to His Father upon the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) His infinite love for us brought forth this prayer. Now we can understand His burning thirst (John xix. 28), for this exterior thirst was only a sign of His infinitely greater thirst, of the insatiable longing for our salvation, for the saving of our souls. Now we can understand the infinite value of this present which He gave to us from the cross, when He assigned His beloved Mother to His favorite disciple, and in him to us all; we were confided and recommended to her motherly love and intercession. Now we can understand why He so readily forgave the penitent thief who was crucified with Him, and promised him: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) It is His mercy, His boundless love for sinners, which causes

Him to forget His own sufferings, if He can only make them happy. Behold, dear brethren, thus has Christ upon the cross become the most perfect sacrifice of justice, and the most touching sacrifice of mercy. Now we understand the salutation which we so often hear at this time: "*O crux, ave, spes unica!*" "Hail, cross, our only hope!" Now it is explained to us how the cross, which meant shame to the heathens and a scandal to the Jews, has gained such distinction that the highest dignitaries of Church and worldly power are proud to adorn their breasts with it; that the cross adorns the crowns and castles of kings and princes. Now we understand why the devil so fears the cross, and that with this sign man can parry the assaults of satan as he can drive away a vicious dog with a stick. The cross is the throne of grace; it has become the throne of God's mercy; therefore this sign has become so glorious, for this reason it is the fear of the evil spirits, it is the consolation and the joy of all pious persons. Wherever Christians dwell, the cross, which is the pledge of the remembrance of the justice and mercy of God, is the principal decoration of man's habitations; it adorns churches and chapels. The cross is the throne of the mercy and justice of God; it is therefore the dearest and most consoling article which we can place in the hand of the dying, those called to appear before the judgment seat of divine justice, when there is no other consolation, no other hope than in the boundless mercy of God. The cross is the throne of the mercy and justice of God; for this reason it is the most beautiful, the only worthy ornament of the Christian's last resting-place, for in the confidence of God's mercy the bodies of the departed lie awaiting the resurrection at the last day, to be reunited with their immortal souls, and then to enter into the glory of heaven, which was merited for us by the Crucified One, by His sacrifice of justice and mercy.

Oh, my brethren, let us therefore venerate the holy cross. It is indeed the mark of honor of a true Christian. Woe unto those Christians who are ashamed of the cross! It is our weapon in the conflict with satan and every evil; woe unto those Christians who do not make use of the cross as a weapon; they will not gain the victory. The cross is our teacher; woe to those Christians who do not know how to learn from it. O let us honor the cross during our lives, that at the hour of our death, when it is put into our hands and pressed to our lips, it may not cause us fear, but that it may be our consolation and the pledge of propitiation of God's justice, and of His mercy obtained. Amen.

Sermons on the Sacred Heart.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS THE MOST WORTHY OBJECT OF ADORATION AND LOVE.

"And they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced."—Zach. xii. 10.

For the devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, which has experienced during this and the last century such a satisfactory development, we are indebted primarily to the blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the order of the Visitation, whose solemn beatification was celebrated by Pope Pius IX. on September 18, 1864. This pious servant of God possessed a most ardent love for Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar. While she was praying one day before the tabernacle her beloved Saviour appeared to her, pointed to His heart, and said:

"See this heart, which loves men so dearly and has stopped at nothing to prove its love to mankind; but instead of love and gratitude it receives from most men only cold ingratitude, contempt, dishonor, and abuse. Thou canst prove thy great love to me by adoring my heart and by spreading the devotion to it throughout the whole Church."

Margaret was fully aware of the difficulty of the task imposed upon her, but she never ceased, assisted by her confessor, to work by prayer and example for the spreading of this devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, and she had the great joy to know, when she died a happy death on October 17, 1690, that this devotion had spread far beyond the limits of her convent. The sacred heart of Jesus is indeed the most worthy object for our devotion and love. We will understand this so much the better and be encouraged in our devotion and love to the sacred heart of Jesus if we consider—

(1.) What is the object in the devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus.

(2.) What is the object of this devotion.

(1.) In a general way, this devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, like so many other devotions, has for its object the incarnate Son

of God, our Divine Saviour, but its particular object is the adorable heart of Jesus, filled as it is with an ardent love for mankind. The human heart of Jesus, with its ardent love for us, therefore, is the object of our devotion. In this sense the devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus was revealed to blessed Margaret. In this sense it was put before the Holy Father for his sanction. In this sense it was introduced for public practice, and in this sense this devotion is loved and practised throughout the Catholic world. The sect of the Jansenists, which was at that time very prevalent, fought against this devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, and maintained that the object of this devotion was not the real, human heart of Jesus, but that it represented the love of Jesus symbolized by his heart. This sect scoffed at the adorers of the sacred heart and called it superstitious materialism to adore and pray to the human Christ or a part thereof, His heart. But Pope Pius VI., in the year 1781, declared most emphatically that the essence of this devotion consists of the contemplation and adoration of the sacred heart of Jesus, and within it the love and devotion of our Divine Saviour.

This devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus has since spread over the whole world as a particularly fond expression of piety. Many confraternities and societies were founded which have the devotion of the sacred heart for their particular object. This devotion was very properly brought into close relationship to the devotion for Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar, for which reason the Feast of the Sacred Heart was fixed upon the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi. Pope Pius IX. and Pope Leo XIII. have both advanced and spread the devotion to the sacred heart by their example, by recommendation, and by the granting of many indulgences. The latter has bestowed particular honor upon the devotion by making, in the year 1889, the Feast of the Sacred Heart a feast of the first order.

The heart of Jesus, the most noble part of His precious body, is in itself worthy of adoration, and as the seal of His infinite love for mankind, the worthiest object of our devotion. Who can recount or report what and how the heart of Jesus felt for mankind during the thirty-three years of His human existence from the crib to the time when His loving heart broke on the cross on Mount Calvary? When His mouth could not speak to us any more, Jesus, though dying, would still speak to us through His

heart. That is why it happened that one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear and pierced His heart, from which immediately there came forth blood and water. Though the Saviour had received numerous wounds and finally shed His blood in streams through His wounds on the hands and feet for our sins, yet He let them pierce even His heart, so as to prove to us, with the gushing forth of the last drop of His heart's blood, that He had spent it all without any reserve for the love of us. It is not without significance that this occurrence has not been reported by any other evangelist but by St. John, the favorite disciple, who knew the love of the heart of Jesus best, "as he had leaned on Jesus' bosom at the Last Supper" (St. John xiii. 23).

The opened heart of Jesus is all the more a worthy object of our devotion as it was the only and final cause of touching His enemies and murderers and of converting many of them. As soon as His heart was opened there were heard sighs and lamentations on Mount Calvary. The heathen centurion, the heathen soldiers, and all the multitude trembled and mourned, and many struck their breasts and said: "Indeed, this man was the Son of God" (St. Luke xxiii. 47, 48, and St. Mark xv. 39).*

Oh, my dear friends, why should we not adore the most sacred heart of Jesus, this adorable seat of the Saviour's love for mankind, this wounded heart, this unerring mirror of the immeasurable love of our Saviour, which touched even His executioners and filled the most hardened sinner with repentance?

This same heart of Jesus is even to-day and will remain for all times the object of our devotion in the most holy sacrament of the altar, for it is still the seat of the love of Jesus for mankind, which embraces all, the just and the unjust, the sick and the well. This heart and this love is and will be for all times the most worthy object of devotion for those who are seeking the Saviour.

(2.) It is easily understood from the foregoing that the particular object of the devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus is to return the love and give, as it were, satisfaction for the insults and offenses which have and are still being offered to the sacred heart of Jesus. The Saviour Himself has pointed out this purpose in His apparition when, while explaining to blessed Margaret the devotion to His most sacred heart, He said: "Instead of love and gratitude, it receives from most men only cold ingratitude, contempt, dishonor, and abuse." These words of Jesus about the purpose of

* Note of the Editor.—This is not according to the Gospels. It happened when Jesus gave up His Ghost with a loud cry.

the devotion to His most sacred heart are perfectly clear, and this double object—the return of His love and satisfaction for the offenses offered to Him—is referred to in all memorials and petitions which refer to the establishing of the feast, the formation of the society, and the adoration of the most sacred heart of Jesus, as well as in the papal bulls which were issued in reference to it.

And who would refuse to love this most amiable, this most loving, this most patient and pure heart of Jesus? "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha," says the apostle.(I. Cor. xvi. 22)—anathematized from the community of Christians. We have heard that Jesus. hanging on the cross, let them pierce His heart so as to prove to us that He would sacrifice for us even the last remains of His love. We find it symbolized in the flowing of blood and water. This blood and water is looked upon by the holy fathers as a twofold and mysterious symbol of the many graces which the generous love of our Saviour has presented to us. From the opened heart of Jesus arise, says St. Chrysostom, the holy sacrament—the blood, which nourishes our soul, and the water, which purifies it.

And how full of significance is this blood and water as a symbol of love and atonement. "When Pilate had condemned the innocent Jesus to death, he called for water to wash his hands before the people, saying: 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it.' And the Jews answering said: 'His blood be upon us and upon our children'" (St. Matt. xxvii. 24, 25). So that all, heathen as well as Jew, should see, that He loved them all in a like manner and offered them all the same means of atonement, blood and water flowed from His pierced heart.

This blood and water of the heart of Jesus is to-day still the inexhaustible source from which men draw eternal life, as the Saviour said to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well: "But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting" (St. John iv. 14). This water points to the water of baptism, without which nobody can have eternal life. But the blood points to the source of grace in the most holy sacrament of the altar, in which Jesus dwells among us and calls to us with tenderest love: "Come to me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). And why should we not return this love? Why not love this heart which was broken for the love of us? But our love for

His most sacred heart should not be shown by words alone. We must show it by our deeds, as the Saviour Himself has said: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (St. John xiv. 21). We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by fulfilling the commandments of the love of God and our neighbors: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. And thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself" (St. Matt. xxii. 37, 39).

We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by appropriating and imitating the favorite virtues of Christ, humility, meekness, and patience, as the Lord says: " . . . learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (St. Matt. xi. 29). We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by professing cheerfully the name of Jesus and His religion, as the Saviour Himself says: "Every one, therefore, that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father, who is in heaven" (St. Matt. x. 32). We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by our willingness to suffer wrongs, persecution, and misfortune for His sake, if God's providence should send us these, like the apostles, who "rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 41). We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by carefully avoiding all sin, because by sin the heart of Jesus is saddened the most; by being willing to avoid everything which may lead us into sin and separate us from the love of Jesus, as the Saviour Himself says: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (St. Matt x. 37). We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by loving our neighbor as ourselves, for the Lord will only acknowledge that we are His followers if we love one another. "As I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (St. John xiii. 34, 35). We can show our love for the most sacred heart of Jesus by our works of Christian charity, by following the principle which the loving heart of Jesus teaches and follows: "And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (St. Luke vi. 31). Yes, my dear friends, it is certain that the heart of

Jesus never rejoices more than when men, whom the Master has taught by word and example, show and exercise practical charity for each other, as we can learn from the words of the Lord Himself: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (St. Matt. xxv. 40).

Do we find this love for the sacred heart in the world? The greater number of men are heathens and know nothing of the love of Jesus and His sacred heart. Among the Christians there are many heretics, and doubters who refuse to believe in the love of Jesus and His sacred heart, who rather offend it and bring sorrow to it by deriding and persecuting His sacred teachings, His holy Church, her priests and rites. And even among the faithful followers of Jesus, how few there are who really and truly love the most sacred heart of Jesus!

Let us, my dear friends, belong to those few who really and truly do love the sacred heart. Let us prove this love—

Firstly, by piously and worthily receiving the sacrament of penance and the Holy Eucharist make reparation to the sacred heart for all the sorrows which we have so often inflicted upon it.

Secondly, let us prove our filial love and gratitude by assisting frequently at the devotions to the sacred heart.

Thirdly, let us add to our daily morning, noon, and evening prayers the short prayer: "Sacred heart of Jesus, I implore that I may love thee ever more and more."

Fourthly, let us offer up all our works, our sorrows, and our sufferings to the sacred heart.

Fifthly, let us not turn away the poor without giving them alms in the name of the most sacred heart.

Finally, let us forgive and forget all offenses offered us for the sake of the most sacred heart.

If we thus love and honor the most sacred heart of Jesus the Lord will fulfill what He has promised us: "And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him . . . and we will come to him and will make our abode with him" (St. John xiv. 21-23). Amen.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE BOOK OF THE ELECT, IN WHICH THE WHOLE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AND REFLECTION IS CONTAINED.

"Behold a hand was sent to me, wherein was a book rolled up." Ez. ii. 9.

Why, dear brethren, did not our divine Saviour Himself write a book whilst He was upon earth in which His Gospel signed with His own hand would be left to posterity? Do we not read that in the Old Testament the Lord God wrote with His own finger the ten commandments on tablets of stone? "The Lord gave to Moses on Mount Sinai two stone tables of testimony, written with the finger of God" (Exod. xxxi. 18). Why did not God also write down the law of grace? How greatly would such a book be prized by all Christians! Why did Jesus leave the writing of His teaching to the holy historians?

Once only we read that Jesus wrote in the dust; for instance, when they brought the woman to Him who was taken in adultery (John viii. 6), but we read nowhere else in Sacred Scripture that the divine Saviour ever wrote anything.

The prophet Ezechiel relates that he received a book from the hand of God, filled with innumerable bitter words, with the charge that he should at once eat it up: "Open thy mouth," said the Lord, "and eat what I give thee. And I looked, and behold a hand was sent to me, wherein was a book rolled up, and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without; and there were written in it lamentations, and canticles, and woe" (Ez. ii. 8, 9). What a wonderful book was that which was bitter and sweet at the same time! for the prophet says further: "And I did eat it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth" (Ez. iii. 3). Saints Jerome, Bernard, Lawrence, Justinian and other holy fathers remarked that this book had no other signification than Jesus Christ, the crucified One, and in particular His Sacred Divine Heart, which is the book of life and of the elect, by which consideration the learned Salmeron cries out: "O, book of books, it should be in our hand by day and night. This is our guide book, the object of our

soliloquies, the spur of love." This book is written within and without. Within, by its divinity and boundless love, with which the Heart of Jesus will love us to the end, for the apostle says: "He loved me, and delivered himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). And without, it is written with an iron pencil, namely, with the cruel nails and the lance. The author of this book was the Holy Ghost, for "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost"; this book was dictated by the heavenly Father, "who produced the word from all eternity." The cover of this book was His sacred humanity; the ink was provided by that precious purple blood, which was shed for our salvation so lavishly during His bitter Passion. The letters and marks in this mysterious book were as numerous as the wounds and scars which He received in His sacred Passion. This book was printed on Golgotha, under the press of His heavy cross, as Isaias says: "I have trodden the wine-press alone" (Is. lxiii. 3). This book is opened and read in public, as on the pulpit of the cross the Sacred Heart of Jesus was pierced by the lance of a cruel soldier. "But one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side" (John xix. 34). On this St. Lawrence Justinian says: "God opened this book publicly, that all might read therein."

This is why, dear brethren, our divine Saviour Jesus, whilst He was amongst us, wrote no book, because He Himself was a book, written within and without (Apoc. v. 1). Out of this divine book we can draw all wisdom and heavenly knowledge. St. Chrysostom writes: "Christ is that book which John saw in his revelations, written within and without; without, we see the wounds of Christ, within we see the fire of His boundless love for us. This book should be meditated upon by the learned and the unlearned; this should be read by all. While the human body, when it is opened and divided anatomically, affords the doctors the precise knowledge of the arrangement of the human body more certainly than a thousand books on the subject, so does Christ, lifted up upon the cross, wounded, and pierced through the heart by the cruel spear, when we contemplate Him, devoutly teach us more for our salvation and the attainment of wisdom than all the books of the theologians. "This," says St. Bernard, "is my highest philosophy, to know Jesus, and Him crucified." And if, at first, this book seems to be bitter, on account of the endless pains and bitterness which He suffered upon the cross, still it will turn into sweetness for your soul, if you

read it with devotion and earnest meditation. It was in this book that the Apostle Paul studied, therefore he considered all things interior to this noblest and sweetest knowledge; for this reason he taught that on this earth he wished only to know Jesus, and Him crucified: "For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I. Cor. ii. 2).

Yes, it was not enough for him to know the Crucified One superficially, but by his truly wonderful knowledge he entered right into the divine Heart of Jesus, upon which all his thoughts were concentrated; therefore he had no greater longing than that all should have this wisdom, and like himself live in the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 8), that is to say, with the love of the Heart of Jesus. Out of this book St. Philip Benizi learnt the great art of climbing to the summit of sanctity, while he kept his eyes raised to the five sacred wounds, and especially to the most amiable Heart of Jesus, the Crucified One, who out of love for us was wounded with the spear, weeping tears of love, and when he was about to die he asked repeatedly of those standing around him for this book. "Give me my book," said he; first they handed him the Breviary, then another book, till finally he pointed with his finger and raised his eyes to the crucifix, saying, "This is my book," and after he had kissed it with a countenance beaming with heavenly joy, he pressed it to his heart, and so gave up his soul into the hands of God.

From this same book St. Bonaventure drew his knowledge and sanctity. When he was once visited by St. Thomas Aquinas, who asked him about his library from which he gathered such remarkable learning, he led him into another room, and showed him the crucifix, on which traces of tears could plainly be seen, and whose opened side was worn away from being kissed, and he said: "This is my only book, and all my library, for what I know I learnt out of this book of life." The Lord spoke once to the prophet Habacuc: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables: that he that readeth it may run over it" (Hab. ii. 2). A wonderful book, written on tables of wood, and set up publicly to be read. This book, says Lyraeus, is Christ lifted up upon the cross; out of this book all, the educated and the ignorant, if they read it with devotion, will learn the way of salvation, and know how to live and die, especially if their attention is riveted on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, out of

which the treasures of knowledge and wisdom flow, and of which mysterious book St. John writes: "It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God" (John vi. 45). Listen, in regard to this truth, to a wonderful example. At one and the same time two persons entered a strict order; one was learned, and experienced in knowledge, and the other was a simple, unlettered man. After a short while the learned one, on account of the severe, and unaccustomed, manner of living, suffered such violent temptations that he decided to return to the world. Before taking this step, however, he told of his temptations candidly to his fellow novice, who encouraged him by powerful and earnest reasoning, to hold his good intention, and to fulfill it to the end of his life, and said: "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." The scholar was surprised at the remarkable speech of the ignorant one, and asked him where he obtained such high-flowing philosophy. The ignorant one drew the crucifix out of his bosom, and said: "Behold, this is my book!" Oh! how good a book is the crucified Jesus.

The Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the Visitation Order, died on the 17th of October, 1690, a holy death, and went to her Spouse; she it was to whom our Blessed Saviour appeared distinctly on the feast of St. John the Evangelist (who himself had drawn all his knowledge from this Sacred Heart, and had seen this Book of Life opened on the cross) and showed her His Sacred Heart, on a throne of fire, as clear as crystal, scarred with the cruel wound, surrounded with a crown of thorns, and surmounted in the centre by a cross. By this appearance Christ the Lord wished to give an account, as in a book, of that love with which He was filled from the first moment of His conception until the end of His life. For this reason He desired that His Sacred Heart should be opened to all, not only in heaven, but on earth, in the Blessed Eucharist, and that all men should find therein a sure help. "Christ lifted up upon the cross," says Dionysius the Carthusian, is the book in which the perfection of all virtues, the sublimity of all contemplation and whatever leads to salvation in the most wonderful, inexpressible and supernatural way can be read or learnt of. Therefore, dear brethren, have courage and confidence, and you will obtain from this Sacred Heart of Jesus crucified and in the Blessed Sacrament, all that is needful for your salvation. This is

the teaching of St. Francis of Sales, one of the greatest lovers and adorers of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. As he was one day addressing a large congregation of people, quite inflamed with the love of Jesus crucified, there were seen suddenly to come from the wounds of Jesus rays of light, and he appeared to the people to be wonderfully enlightened, and he called the Divine Heart of Jesus his gem, and his most precious pearl. And in conclusion, all those living in the world should take Jesus crucified as their model, and imitate Him, in life and death. As he who sails on the sea takes notice of a certain star, according to which he shapes his course, so as not to miss the port, so should the Christian, who is in such peril to his body and soul, choose the Sacred Heart as his guiding star, if he does not want to miss the port of eternal glory, in the midst of the great dangers of the sea of the world, by which he will attain a perfect knowledge, how to avoid evil, and how to do good, and by whose assistance and grace protected he will stand fearless and unshaken through all the dangers of life and death: "Where," asks St. Bernard, "are we surer or more fearless than when in the wounds of the Redeemer?" And we will add: "And in the most Sacred Heart of Jesus?" The world may crash in its fury, the flesh tempt us, the devil persecute us, fear not whilst you are in the cave in the rocks, that is in the sacred wounds. O my Soul! how lovely it will be in the embrace of the Crucified One, in the kiss of His Sacred Heart, to breathe our last sigh.

That you may obtain this grace, take shelter often in this book, namely in the Heart of your divine Redeemer, which is full of heavenly teaching, and spiritual consolation; let not a day, or an hour, pass by without thinking of the most amiable Heart of Jesus, to love It, and honor It; for this reason accustom yourself when the hour strikes, to strike your breast and to say: "Heart of Jesus, I love Thee, for Thou hast first loved me." Amen.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS APPEARS BURNING, SO AS TO INFLAME OUR HEARTS ANEW, WITH LOVE FOR THE HOLY EUCHARIST AND HIS PASSION.

"I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?"—Luke xii. 49.

In the Old Testament God often appeared to men in fire. When He gave the Ten Commandments He appeared upon Mount Sinai in the midst of thunder and lightning. "And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke, because the Lord was come down upon it in fire" (Exod. xix. 18). The Lord appeared to Daniel upon a fiery throne: "I beheld till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His Head like clean wool; His throne like flames of fire" (Dan. vii. 9).

The three Babylonian youths, Sidrach, Misach and Abdenago, saw the Lord appear to them in the midst of the fiery furnace: "Behold, I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire; and there is no hurt in them, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. iii. 92).

When Moses and the children of Israel came out of Egypt there appeared to them a cloud and pillar of fire, in which the Lord had set up His fiery throne, and whence He sent forth the lightning which killed Pharao; but the children of Israel He conducted safely through the Red Sea to Palestine: "Behold, the Lord, looking upon the Egyptian army, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, slew their host" (Exod. xiv. 24). The Lord even vouchsafed to erect His throne in the midst of a bush, for He appeared to Moses in the burning bush and called him to Him, and consoled him and all the children of Israel, who were so sorely oppressed by the cruel tyranny of Pharao. Why did the Lord of infinite majesty appear in the old law upon a fiery throne, and why did He so often set up His throne in the midst of burning fire? "This fiery throne," says Philip Diez, "is love, for God is seated in the midst of love; for this reason He desired to be called God, fire"—"The Lord thy God is a consuming fire" (Deut. iv. 24)—to prove to us by this fiery throne the in-

tense love with which He loved us from the beginning. "With everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee, said the Lord, thy Redeemer" (Isaias liv. 8).

And now behold a new wonder of this immeasurable love. The same good God, *"having spoken on divers occasions, and in many ways, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets: last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by His Son"* (Heb. i. 1); for He, the Redeemer of the world, to prove to us His infinite love, vouchsafed to show His most Sacred Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, resting upon a throne of fire, surmounted with a cross, pierced by the lance and crowned with thorns. So that, through this most amiable object, to draw the tepid hearts of men to His love, and at the same time to inflame them with a pure-fire love. "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49). The aim of this devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus is that, by this veneration and love, all the ingratitude and the grievous wrongs committed against Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, by the heathens, the Jews, the heretics, bad Christians, and even the faithful, especially those who receive Holy Communion unworthily, may be made reparation for by the devout faithful in their zeal for the honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist and on Calvary; and for this purpose the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi has been set apart to this devotion, so that on this day the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus may be venerated by the devout faithful with a special honor and worship. There is no doubt that this devotion is very pleasing to Jesus Christ, and that a soul who loves and practises this devotion will be the recipient of numerous graces from Him.

This devotion was declared by the Rev. Father de la Colombière, S.J., a man renowned for his apostolic zeal and sanctity, after he had tried the spirit of the servant of God, the Blessed Margaret, to be right, pious, holy and very profitable for the entire Church of God. Since then this devotion has been approved of by the Church, and at present it is spread all over the Catholic world.

The late Holy Father, Pius IX., is the Pope of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, for it was reserved for him to inaugurate

the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it was during his pontificate that Margaret Mary Alacoque was beatified. During his pontificate, in 1875, was also celebrated the 200th anniversary jubilee of the Sacred Heart being revealed to Blessed Margaret Mary. This great festival was accompanied by innumerable blessings. In this way the words of our Lord: "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" already began to be fulfilled.

We are reminded by this consideration of that sacred fire which God sent down from heaven upon the high priest, Aaron, when he was offering the first sacrifice on the altar erected by Moses. From that time on, this fire was always kept burning by having new wood laid upon it, until finally the city of Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the Temple and altars destroyed; then the priests took this fire and hid it in a well in the valley. When, after many years, the Jews sought this sacred fire, they did not find that fire, but in its place, they found in the well a thick liquid; Nehemias had this drawn off, and it was sprinkled on the sacrifice of the new altar. And, behold, a miracle took place, when the sun, which, till then, was covered with clouds, sent forth its rays upon the altar and upon this liquid. An enormous fire was kindled, which not only turned the water into fire, but consumed in an instant the sacrifice on the altar (II. Mach. i. 22). This fire, which descended from heaven, is, according to the explanation of St. Gregory the Great, the love of God. By the altar our heart is represented, on which this divine love should burn always. But this fire of love has been changed in the hearts of most Christians into a thick liquid. And, behold, through the Most Tender Heart of Jesus, as soon as it shines as the mystical sun, which, until then, was hidden behind the clouds, for there were few who thought of this Sacred Heart, a great fire of devotion was kindled. And as in the time of the seraphic St. Francis, on whom the Divine Redeemer imprinted the marks of His five sacred wounds, so that the remembrance of His most bitter Passion, which at that time, on account of the unfortunate conditions which prevailed in the Church of God, was almost entirely obliterated, was to be in a wonderful manner renewed in the hearts of the faithful, it happened in our own times that His divine goodness gave

new life through His Sacred Heart burning with love to the cold and changed world, and kindled in our hearts the fire of His love, so that we might love our Divine Redeemer, who gave us His Most Sacred Heart out of an excess of love, with the love of our whole hearts. This is the aim of this devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The sight and the contemplation of the divine and renewed Heart of Jesus should be a means for us to lift up our minds to God and our Redeemer, and to love Him with the whole strength of our hearts.

Our Divine Saviour did nothing on this earth which He had not before prefigured in the Old Testament. This Most Sacred Heart burning with love was also typified by that costly altar of incense which was made of setim wood, overlaid with gold, upon which the Lord ordered the priests to burn sweet-smelling incense (Exod. xxx. 1). Can the Most Holy Trinity be offered a sweeter or more pleasing incense than the Most Sacred and Divine Heart of Jesus, which is hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament? This most holy, glowing and burning Heart of Jesus is further typified by that golden censer which St. John speaks of in the Apocalypse: "And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth" (Apoc. viii. 5). This angel is the Angel of Great Counsel, namely, Christ Jesus, whose Heart, as St. Bernadine says, was compared to a censer filled with glowing coals, on account of His ardent, glowing love for us. This, His love, He has poured out entirely before His Sacred Altar to the four ends (sides) that is to say of His Cross, through His open side. "He filled it with glowing coals and cast it upon the earth."

This Sacred Heart was prefigured by that propitiatory that was placed over the Ark between the two Cherubim. This propitiatory was the Place of Atonement, where God once vouchsafed to show mercy to His people; for this reason it was called God's throne, or seat, upon which God, the Lord of the high priests, when He entered the Holy of Holies, gave answer and prophecy: "When Moses entered into the tabernacle of the covenant to consult the oracle, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from the propitiatory" (Num. vii. 89).

Let us now pass from the types to the reality; namely, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: What was this Sacred Heart upon

earth, and what is it still in heaven, and in the Most Blessed Sacrament but a propitiatory where all sinful souls find a safe refuge from the wrathful countenance of God? O, sinners! O, blind mortals! what are you doing? Why do you remain in your sins? Why do you hasten on toward the abyss of hell? Tell me.

Dear Christian souls, delay not; arise and hasten to the most amiable Heart of Jesus, to the kind Saviour, Mediator. There you will find a sure harbor of refuge, forgiveness of sins, and perfect peace. "Let us enter," says Simon of Cassia, "into the Heart of Jesus, that august Heart, that hidden Heart; to the Heart which thinks of all, to the Heart which knows all, to the Heart which loves; and through the open door let us enter and, at least, by the strength of our love, become like unto this Heart. It shows a great indifference on the part of those who do not enter, though they know that the entrance is open.

Now, O Christian soul, there remains only one thing for us to do, and that is to turn with our whole heart toward this Sacred Heart, inflamed and wounded with love of us. Let us imitate St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who loved the Sacred Heart and the Holy Name of Jesus with the whole strength of his soul; which is evident, as he called Jesus by no other name than "his Love." The ardent longing of his heart and his love for Jesus were revealed when he was thrown as prey to the lions, in the amphitheatre at Rome; he was devoured by them, but his heart remained untouched, and on it was found written, in letters of gold, the Most Holy Name of Jesus. "In his heart," says Nadasus, "which they cut up into pieces, there was found, written in letters of gold upon each separate piece, the name of Jesus."

O that our heart might be animated and inflamed with a like love for the Heart and the Name of Jesus. O good Jesus! do now that which Thou didst once announce to the prophet Ezechiel: "And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezechiel xxxvi. 26). Behold, our heart is hard and hardened in sin; O, soften it with the Blood of Thy Most Sacred Heart, that it may know Thee, and love and seek none but Thee in the future. Our heart, O Jesus,

is stony and our will is stubborn and accustomed to follow its passions; O, give us a heart of flesh, a docile heart, a pliant heart, which observes Thy commandments in the smallest particular and finds its love in Thee alone. Our heart is cold and tepid; O inflame it with the fire of Thy love, that it may burn only with love of Thee, until it is reduced to ashes. Our heart, finally, is inconstant, and, like a windmill, always in motion; O my Jesus! strengthen it and fortify it with Thy grace, until at last, having overcome all dangers, it rests in Thee for all eternity! Amen.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A MIRROR OF EVERY VIRTUE, IN WHICH WE SHOULD OFTEN LOOK AT OURSELVES, SO AS TO WASH AWAY THE STAINS OF OUR SOULS, AND TO INCREASE IN VIRTUE.

"For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness."—Wis. vii. 26.

In the Old Testament, God commanded that a brass basin should be made polished like the brightest mirror and placed at the door of the holy tent, so that the priests, when they wished to enter God's tent, could behold themselves beforehand in this basin, and, if they found anything soiled or in disorder, could cleanse it in a wash-basin. (Exod. xxxviii. 8.) By this brass and shining mirror is understood the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in which we see as in a very bright mirror, every virtue reflected, and in which we can not only behold distinctly the spots and stains of our soul, but also wash them away in its precious blood: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I. John i. 7).

Once, when St. Catherine of Sienna looked into this mirror of the divine Heart of Jesus, and beheld her own heart upon the other side, still subject to so many imperfections and faults, she beseeched our Lord, in the most urgent manner, that He would vouchsafe to take her heart away from her, and in its place to give her His spotless Sacred Heart. This prayer was pleasing to the Lord, and He took

her heart away and gave her instead His own, so that in the future she could say to the Lord: "I offer to Thee, O Lord, not my heart, but Thine."

When the virgin Catherine Raconisia, who loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the tenderest devotion, looked with the eyes of her soul into this mirror, and saw therein, as in the clearest crystal, the spots upon her heart, she implored the Lord that He might take her heart and purify it in His blood, and then replace it; the divine Saviour granted her desire, took away her heart, and returned it to her purer and holier than it was before; and this took place five times in the course of her life, as is related by the Reverend Father John Weyer, S.J.

O Christian soul! look also at night, during your examination of conscience, into this divine mirror, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and you will find material enough for self-accusation. Consider His astonishing humility, how He knelt at Judas' feet, allowed Barabbas to be preferred to Himself, and was nailed to the cross between two thieves. Oh, how great was this humility of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! And then consider, on the other hand, how little of humility your own heart knows, with all its vain desires for worldly honor and riches.

In this way you may consider all the virtues; for instance, patience, purity, sobriety, poverty, mortification, and so on, and in every case you will find imperfections and negligences and cause for reproach. Acknowledge these faults of your heart, and implore earnestly the Sacred Heart of Jesus for grace, so that you may improve in the future.

It is related by authentic writers of Saint Rosalia, the daughter of King Sinibald, that, one day, at her father's desire, she dressed herself in her royal robes, and then comtemplated herself thus adorned in the mirror. She had hardly glanced at the mirror when she was seized with a sudden dread, because there she saw, in the mirror, the divine Saviour, streaming with blood, crowned with thorns, His whole body bruised, and fastened to the cross with iron nails; and she heard the voice of the Redeemer, saying: "Behold the Man whom thou didst crucify; behold the wounds which thou hast made; behold the side which thou didst pierce." Her heart was so strongly affected by this pitiful voice and by the sorrowful sight that, without consideration for the world, for

kingdom, wealth, royal pleasures, honors, and even the paternal house, she renounced them all, and chose a dismal cave in the rocks, where she passed the rest of her life in constant contemplation of her crucified Saviour, until her blessed death. In the cave she wrote with her own hand this inscription: "I, Rosalia, daughter of Sinibald, Lord of Quisquina and Rosa, have, for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, decided to live in this cave." Her holy body was found during the pontificate of Pope Urban VIII., in the year 1625, and on this occasion Sicily was delivered from a terrible plague at her intercession.

Pope Boniface VIII. sent once to the Queen of Great Britain an exceedingly bright gilt mirror, with a costly comb, as a special present. Now, I offer you, my dear friends, one like it, only a much truer mirror, namely, the most holy and precious Heart of Jesus, which is surmounted with a cross and surrounded with thorns. Hang this divine mirror in your bedroom. Go for advice during the day to this mirror, and efface in it the stains of your soul. I offer you also a comb, namely, the prickly thorns which pierced this blessed Heart of Jesus. "Look and make *it* according to the pattern" (Ex. xxv. 40). O Christian soul! look frequently into the mirror of the divine Heart of Jesus, and make amends for the sins you have committed against God, against yourself, and against your neighbor. But do not look into it superficially and in passing, of which the Apostle St. James says, "beholding his own countenance in a glass; for he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was" (James i. 23), and, therefore, he took no pains to wash away the stains and to put in order that which was in disorder; but look into it after the manner of vain young girls, who do not leave the mirror until the least little thing is attended to. In this way, Christian soul, look into the mirror of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and learn there to overcome your anger, to practise meekness, and to imitate His patience and chastity, His obedience, His love of God and of His neighbor, and to be resigned to His holy will in all things: "For I have given you an example," says the divine Saviour, "that as I have done to you, so you do also" (John xiii. 15).

It will be useful to relate here an episode in the life of the Reverend Father Hippolyte Galatinus, of Florence. This priest lived in Florence, in the neighborhood of a vain woman, whose godless life and shame he took very much to heart. To save her soul he made

use of the following stratagem. He had a picture painted, representing the divine Saviour, scourged and crowned with thorns, streaming with blood. This picture, which from the back was made to look like a mirror, he hung, after the manner of women, at the window, and he stood frequently before it, arranging his hair, adjusting his cap, and so on. To the before-mentioned sinner, who lived opposite, it seemed strange to see this priest, who was so well known on account of his sanctity, standing so often before his mirror; and she remarked, jokingly, that he had better lend her his looking-glass for a while. This was a much-desired message for Hippolyte. He took the supposed mirror and showed her the picture. At this unexpected sight, the sinner was strangely moved, and touched, she looked again and again at the picture, and shortly afterward she forsook the world, entered a convent, and led a very edifying life until her death.

The philosopher Socrates desired that his scholars should frequently look at themselves in the mirror, so as to correct the carriage of their bodies, their manners, and their motions.

Christian soul! I know of a mirror, in which you can not only see everything which is immoral, defective, and objectionable, but in which you can improve yourself. This mirror is the most amiable Heart of Jesus, which the Church, with so much right, places before all Christians as a model for all their actions, morals, and virtues. Look diligently into this holy mirror, so that this model may be engraven upon your heart. "Thou hast, O Lord Jesus Christ," says Saint Drogo Hostiensis, "made Thy body into a mirror for my soul."

If you love your soul, take the Sacred Heart of Jesus for your mirror, place it before your spiritual eyes, look into it often, ask help of it in every temptation, so that it may be your salvation in that last struggle, which will open for you the gates of eternity. Amen.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS BEGINS EVEN AT HIS BIRTH THE WORK OF OUR REDEMPTION, BY SUFFERING AND INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE.

"She laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." —Luke ii. 7.

Holy Scripture tells us that to save his life the child Moses was placed by his mother in a basket made of bulrushes, tightened with clay and pitch, and laid in the sedges by the river's brink, where he would be found by the king's daughter. (Exod. ii. 3.) What a sad fate for an innocent new-born babe! But the child Moses in the basket of bulrushes was only a prototype of the divine Saviour, who at His birth was laid by His Holy Mother in the poor manger of the stable. "She laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke ii. 7.) The fathers tell us that this wooden manger, which is still preserved and venerated at Rome in the Basilica of St. Maria Maggiore, was for Christ a model of the cross which He was to carry all His life long. "Christ," says St. Peter Damian, "lying in the manger, typified the way and manner of His martyrdom," and another saintly writer says: "Jesus, exposed to the cold, and lying on the hard wood, began then the sufferings and torments of martyrdom;" while St. Bernard writes, "Consider the life of the good Jesus, and you will find it nothing but a cross, for from the moment of His incarnation, He was always suffering."

You may recognize in this, dear brethren, the wonderful arrangements of God; the sacrifices of the Israelites pleased Him no longer, nor the blood of calves and oxen. His divine justice required another kind of sacrifice, a sacrifice of peace in expiation of the sins of the whole world, and this was the divine Heart of Jesus, which was ready at the will of the Father. God willed that this innocent sacrifice should be offered up to Him, and the child Jesus offered the same most willingly; therefore the Lord said to the Psalmist: "Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou didst not require: then said I: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do Thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of my heart." (Ps. 39 v. 7, 8, 9.)

The holy fathers point out who was that nobleman of whom St.

Luke relates (xix. 12) that he went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. St. Basil says, " This nobleman was none other than Christ our Saviour, for He is not only noble as to His divinity, but also as to His humanity. He went into a far country, for He left the bosom of His Father in heaven to come into this world which was a strange country, where, not without great pains, He sought a kingdom for Himself." And what kind of kingdom did He seek? Contemplate the Sacred Heart of Jesus and you will find therein this kingdom. The Lord reigns from the cross. " This dominion of the most bitter cross was for Him, above all the kingdoms of this world, and this cross was given to Him in the manger, by the Father, as a birthright, of which Isaias (ix. 6) says: " For a child is born to us; and a son is given to us; and the government is upon His shoulder: " (namely the cross), and we add: in His Heart, too, for Jesus bore this government, namely the cross and His sufferings, in His heart all through His life.

St. Chrysostom remarks: " The scourge, the crown of thorns, the cross, and the other ignominies and tortures of the passion are the glory of the only begotten of the Father; for this He came into the world, for this He was conceived, nursed by the Blessed Virgin, and brought up by St. Joseph, to die finally upon the cross, as a sacrifice of love, for the salvation of all, and still more, even after His death and all the agonies that He endured, out of pure love to leave us His Heart as a pledge." O good Jesus! I know not how to admire sufficiently this infinite love of Thy divine Heart! Thou dost indeed love me without bounds, O most Sacred Heart of Jesus, for Thou dost consider it an honor to suffer for me, and my heart should not love Thee in return? For my sins, Thou didst suffer inexpressible tortures, and I would not leave off adding sin upon sin? O kindest Jesus! late indeed have I loved Thy most amiable Heart! Behold in me, a repentant sinner, for in future Thy divine Heart shall be the only object of my love!

Josue, the unconquered general, who loved his people in adversity and was faithful to the end, after having led them finally with tremendous difficulty through the river Jordan to Palestine, divided this promised land among them, taking for himself the least and most unimportant place, Thamnath Saraa, in Mount Ephraim, as his dwelling. (Josue xix. 50.) When St. Jerome, traveling through Palestine, saw this place, he could not admire sufficiently Josue's magnanimity, that he, although the leader of them all, should mod-

estly choose for himself the most unimportant, rocky, and barren spot in the whole land.

Let us take leave of these prototypes, and return to the original. Josue means, by transposing the letters, O Jesu. Now, what has the meekest Heart of Jesus done, who loved poverty so dearly? At His birth, although the richest, it became for us poor and needy, by choosing for its abode a wretched and lowly spot, the cave of Bethlehem, and for His throne the animals' manger, to show us that He would not only be the shepherd of our souls, but also their food in the Holy Eucharist. O most amiable Heart of Jesus! what would Josue, Thy prototype have said, could he have seen Thee at Thy birth, shivering with cold, lying among the cattle? "Did any one ever hear of a greater lowliness," exclaims Didacus Stella, "than that of being born in a stable? Or of greater poverty than that of being wrapped in insufficient swaddling clothes? Can anything be more severe than at such a tender age to be laid in a manger?"

Therefore, it is not to be wondered at, that the divine Heart of Jesus, speaking by the mouth of the royal Psalmist, compares Himself to a worm, saying, "But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people." (Ps. xxi. 7.) The worm is cast out from the dwellings of the poorest; Christ and His Blessed Mother were refused refuge everywhere in Bethlehem, and were obliged to take shelter in a stable, to protect themselves from the cold. The worm remains burrowed in the wood or in the earth, and is denied the light of day; Christ, who is, in truth, the *hidden* God, began His childhood in a wooden manger, and in His manhood hung on the wood of the cross; as the worm is spurned by every one, even the least of men, and trodden under foot without mercy, so Christ was persecuted by the ungodly, and trodden under their feet. The worm, on account of its displeasing appearance, is detested by every one; men turn away their heads in disgust at sight of it. O Christian soul! look at thy Saviour's face, look into that most innocent Heart! What dost thou behold there? "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness; and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him; despised, and the most abject of men." (Is. liii. 2, 3.)

The worm finally is placed upon the angler's hook, and the fish swim toward it, and being allured by the bait, they are caught. O my Jesus! O my Love! Is not Thy most Sacred Heart like unto a worm, which not only offers itself as our food in the Holy Eucharist,

but also upon the cross as on a fish hook, fastened by the iron nails Thou dost call us to Thy service! "O what a humble worm is Jesus Christ," says St. Bernard, "the reproach of men and the outcast of the people, despised by all without cause, without punishment, trodden upon like a worm." Christian soul! behold how sad it is, to see Jesus lying in the manger, like the most despised worm of the earth, and embracing the cross with both hands, and pressing it to His Heart. And thou dust and ashes, a veritable nothing, thou darest to pride yourself! "O proud corpse," cries the pious Gerson, "if all thy miseries are not sufficient to humble thee, look, I beg of thee, at the humility of thy King, thy Lord, and thy God. Behold! He who weighs the globe in His three fingers, lying in a stable between two animals, and dying at last between two thieves on the ignominious tree of the cross." O astonishing miracle of the love of God! And thou dost not yet love this Sacred Heart of Jesus? Nor conform thyself to His most holy will in all thy affairs? Thy Lord and God lies in a common manger, exposed to every kind of hardship and suffering. He sheds bitter tears on account of the cold, and His whole life will be nothing but suffering, persecution, want, the cross, and death. And thou, worldly soul, desirest to enjoy all pleasures, to look after the comforts of thy body, to lie on a soft couch, to adorn thyself with magnificent clothes, to be a slave to thy appetite, and to obey in all things the cravings of the flesh? O poor soul! Listen, as final admonition, to the words of St. Jerome: "It is impossible for any one to partake of the *present* and the *future* joys, and to pass from the one gladness to the other." Amen.

THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS OFFERS ITSELF UP, IN THE FIRST PLACE, AS A MORNING OFFERING TO THE HEAVENLY FATHER FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

"They carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord."—Luke ii. 22.

SYNOPSIS.—The command of God to offer up to Him every first-born. The Mother of God journeying to Jerusalem to obey this law. The morning offering at the Temple and the evening sacrifice at the Cross. Explanation of the morning and evening sacrifice of the Old Testament. How they foreshadowed the Passion of Our Lord. The Lamb of God. David's offering a type of Our Lord. The Heart of Jesus the purest and holiest offering to the Father.

God commanded the Israelites to bring Him every first-born as a sacrifice in remembrance of the truth, that the angel had killed in one night all the first-born of the Egyptians, but had spared those of the Israelites. "Sanctify unto me every first-born" (Exod. xiii. 2). To obey this law the Mother of God, after having spent forty days in the stable at Bethlehem, journeyed to Jerusalem with the Divine Child and His foster father, there to offer up to the eternal Father in the Temple her first and only begotten Son. Holding Him in her arms, and kneeling down with reverence and devotion, she there offered Him up to Almighty God, according to the testimony of St. Thomas of Villanova, with the following words: "Almighty Father! Take this sacrifice which I, Thy servant, offer up to Thee for the whole world; accept our mutual Son, for He is Thine from all eternity, mine from time; take now from the hands of Thy servant this most holy morning offering, which will thereafter from the arms of the Cross be offered up to Thee as an evening sacrifice." Oh, what an agreeable sacrifice! Inasmuch as the tender Infant Jesus consecrated, at His first public presentation in the Temple, His Most Sacred Heart to the Heavenly Father to glorify Him, and to reconcile Him with the human race. Truly a most agreeable sacrifice, than which this earth has never seen another alike!

"Never," says Luke of Burgos, "had such a sacrifice appeared in the tent of the covenant. Never had there been seen in the Temple of Solomon such a glorious and illustrious offering." Already the prophecy of Aggeus began to be fulfilled: "Great shall be the glory of this last house, more than of the first, for the desired of all nations shall come: and I will fill the house with glory." (Aggeus ii. 8, 10.) God the Lord and highest lawgiver had commanded our fathers that they should daily, as a perpetual sacrifice, offer up an innocent lamb in the morning at the rising of the sun, and a second one in the evening at the setting of the sun, for the mutual good of the people. This is that morning and evening sacrifice of which David so often speaks, and which was offered up by the people at public expense. First of all, the lamb was washed in the pond, then it was slain by the priest, cleansed of the blood and entrails, and then roasted upon a wooden spit in the shape of a cross over a slow fire, while the priest and the people stood around with hearts and hands uplifted imploringly to heaven, offering up to God, the Lord of the living and the dead, this lamb as an agreeable sacrifice. "This is what thou shalt sacrifice upon the altar: Two

lambs of a year old every day continually, one lamb in the morning, and the other in the evening." (Exod. xxix. 38.) O sweetest Jesus! Thou art that morning and evening sacrifice; the morning sacrifice, as Thou wast brought, as St. Bernard says, "by Thy holy Mother on the day of her Purification and there offered up for the first time in the Temple to the eternal Father for the salvation of the whole world, where she paid for Thee to the priest, as to the representative of God, five shekels as ordained by the law." St. Thomas of Villanova says: "The Redeemer was bought by the Virgin for five shekels, He who should redeem the world by His five wounds." But Thou didst become an evening sacrifice, O Jesus! When on the evening of Thy life Thou wast nailed to the wooden spit of the holy Cross and inflamed in the fire of divine love, which burned unceasingly in Thy Most Sacred Heart, Thou wast offered up there for the sins of all people as an agreeable burnt-offering.

St. John the Baptist points out to the Jews the Redeemer, who had just returned out of the wilderness, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." O Christian soul, how much art thou obliged to this innocent Lamb! He could with perfect justice have cast thee into hell long ago, and behold! He vouchsafes to become a sacrifice for thee, and to offer up in the Temple His divine Heart itself to His Heavenly Father as a worthy satisfaction for thy sins. O love, O boundless kindness! Can we, O God, make any return which is worthy of Thy love? Oh, if we had a hundred, if we had a thousand hearts, should we not be obliged to love Thee with all these hearts and with all their strength?

It is related of King David in the second book of Kings (xxiv. 25) that when a pestilence devastated the city of Jerusalem he, to appease the wrath of God, erected an altar, upon which he offered up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings for the salvation of the entire kingdom: "And David built there an altar to the Lord and offered holocausts and peace-offerings: and the Lord became merciful to the land; and the plague was stayed from Israel." Then the angel which had been seen in the clouds with a drawn sword immediately withdrew the sword and replaced it in the scabbard, as a sign that God was propitiated. "And when the angel of the Lord had stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord had pity on the affliction, and said to the angel that slew the people: It is

enough: now hold thy hand." (II. Kings xxiv. 16.) What signification did this sacrifice have which was so pleasing to God that it brought peace and salvation to the people? O most amiable Jesus! Thou wast prefigured by this and similar peace-offerings as the morning and evening sacrifice. "Through this," says Cornelius à Lapide, "Christ was to be prefigured, stretched upon the cross and slain like a beast of sacrifice for the redemption of mankind."

If even this offering as offered up by David at the time of the pestilence could appease God, because it prefigured Christ, what would the true, living, innocent, and divine Heart of Jesus, that meek Lamb, be able to do if thou shouldst offer it up to the eternal Father for thy soul, especially in the holy sacrifice of the Mass or when receiving the Holy Eucharist with a clean conscience? O how holy, how pure, how exalted would this offering be in the face of the whole court of Heaven! Is it possible that thy prayers and desires would be rejected and not be heard if this innocent victim should be offered up to the Heavenly Father?

Father Lohner, S.J., relates of Albuquerque, the celebrated admiral, that on one of his journeys to the East Indies his fleet was in the greatest peril of sinking on account of a terrific storm which was raging. When the danger was at its height he seized his child, and, holding it up toward heaven, he besought God, the Lord of the world, to spare him and his companions from death for the sake of that innocent child. His prayer was heard, they were saved, the storm ceased.

O most gracious Virgin! Mother of God and of men, Mother of the Redeemer, behold the misery in which the people of all countries languish, and how by the waves of this misery they are tossed here and there, and how Holy Church is persecuted, publicly and secretly, by word and deed, how she is blasphemed, calumniated, robbed, oppressed, because they desire to annihilate her and make her disappear from the face of the earth. War, pestilence, hunger, murder, robbery, deception, suicide, and all sorts of crimes and vices rage over the whole earth. O gracious Mother! give aid to the Holy Church, have pity upon the Holy Father, the persecuted Christians; show thy sweetest Son Jesus to the eternal Father, that He may vouchsafe to grant peace and unity to the Church and the people for the sake of the innocence of this meekest Lamb, and especially for the sake of His most amiable and most innocent Heart.

It is related of a high official of the court of Queen Candacis of

Aethiopia that, when reading in Isaias the words: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth" (Is. liii. 7), this heathen, by this simple passage, was so moved in his heart with love for the most holy and meekest Heart of Jesus, this divine Lamb, that he had this verse explained to him by St. Philip. He then confessed his belief in Jesus Christ and asked for baptism.

O Christian soul! If the consideration alone of the innocent Heart of Jesus, that immaculate and spotless Lamb, could work such a wonderful conversion in a heathen, what may and will the Real Presence of this divine Heart in the Holy Eucharist accomplish for us? Let us therefore exclaim with St. John: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction." (Apoc. v. 12.) Amen.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE MOST OBEDIENT OF ALL, AND IN HIS HIDDEN AND PUBLIC LIFE THE MOST WILLING TO WORK.

"He went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them."—Luke ii. 51.

SYNOPSIS.—The docile and obedient lamb chosen as symbol of Our Lord Jesus, the model of obedience. Miraculous examples of obedience to the word of man. The most miraculous of all the obedience of God to man, to His parents, to His persecutors, to the priest at the altar. How about our own obedience? Toward God? Toward our lawful superiors? St. Bernard. Jesus gave us an example, do we follow it? Jesus foreshadowed by Adam. His willingness to work and His love of the workingman. Gerson. Let us follow the example of Jesus.

The lamb is a well-chosen symbol of obedience, for it follows everywhere in its mother's footsteps, even when they lead to death and slaughter. During the persecutions in the days of the early Church, the Christians did not dare to place the image of our crucified Saviour for public veneration in places where they assembled for divine worship lest the newly converted should waver in their faith when they looked upon the pitiable form of the dying Redeemer upon the cross. Nor should the heathen mock at or

revile this image. They placed upon the altar a simple cross, and beneath it a lamb lying peacefully among the instruments of the Passion, with a Latin inscription meaning:

The Lamb redeems the sheep.
Christ innocently suffers for them and
Reconciles the sinful children to their Father.

What a beautiful symbol of the first Christians! In the Old Testament the whole world was astonished when the sun obeyed the command of a mortal man, Josue, and at his word stood still in its course: "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hasted not to go down the space of a day: . . . the Lord obeying the voice of a man." (Josue x. 13, 14.) But how much more should we be astonished that the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is the sun of justice, was so obedient as to willingly subject itself to Mary, His holy Mother, and to St. Joseph, a carpenter, in their daily tasks and labors. "Take notice," says St. Bernard, "of what the Saviour did; observe how He submitted His will to theirs—to the will of a woman (the Blessed Virgin) and that of a poor carpenter."

We admire the obedience of the rocks, which, at the command of Moses, yielded water plentifully; the obedience of the sea, which on being touched by Moses' staff opened up a path to Palestine for the people to Palestine; we are astonished at the obedience of the Jordan, which receded before the ark of the covenant; the obedience of the fire, which at the command of Elias fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice; the obedience of the earth, which at the command of Moses opened and swallowed up Dathan and the rabble of Abiron. These and similar wonders of nature, where the elements obeyed the voice of man, excite our admiration. But why are we not astonished, why are we not surprised, that the Creator of nature, God Himself, the Incarnate Christ, obeys without objection and without murmuring the commands of a poor mother and a foster-father, a carpenter—why He is subjected to them in all things and why He renders to them interior and exterior obedience, He whose sole motive of obedience was the love of His heavenly Father? This is indeed the greatest wonder.

Not only was the Sacred Heart of Jesus, this most perfect model of obedience, subject to His parents, but also in His Passion subject to the blasphemous judges, the bloodthirsty executioners, and all manners of most cruel punishments and tortures, and even to

death upon the cross; but what we can never sufficiently appreciate is his obedience to the authority of the priest at the altar, where at the words of consecration in the holy sacrifice of the Mass He at once obediently descends from heaven and submits Himself in the Sacred Host entirely to the discretion of the priest. Truly a wonderful condescension of the Sacred Heart toward us.

Where is, however, our obedience toward God and His commandments? What about our obedience toward those in authority and our parents who have command over us in God's stead? "Learn, O man, to obey," says St. Bernard; "learn, O earth, to subject thyself; learn, O dust, to obey; blush ye proud ashes. God abases Himself, and thou exaltest thyself. God is subject to man, and thou desirest to rule over men than preferrest thyself to the Creator."

"He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them." (Luke ii. 51.) Observe how much meaning the evangelist puts here in a few words, since he passes over in silence everything which the Sacred Heart of Jesus did in the time from His eighteenth year until His baptism, and mentions only this of the childhood and youth of Jesus Christ: "He was subject to them."

He prayed, He fasted, He was silent, He labored with His poor parents. Since Jesus was subject to these parents, without doubt He showed His obedience by sharing with them the burdens of labor.

Let us consider more closely the words: "And He was subject to them." Who was subject? God, the Lord of the whole world, the Creator of the world, to whom all things are subject. He abased and subjected Himself willingly to His creatures. To whom? To a poor virgin, His mother, and a humble carpenter, who assumed the place of father to Him. The Creator of the world subjected Himself humbly to them, obeying eagerly their every word and glance, saying always: "Behold, I am here." (Is. lii. 6.) Why? To give us an example how to avoid idleness, to practise humility, and not to shun any trouble and any efforts to obtain heaven and the salvation of our soul. O men! O Christians! behold and consider Him, the great wise architect of the world: how He works in the little house at Nazareth, how He collects the chips in the carpenter's workshop, and sweeps the house; He carries the wood upon His shoulders, splits and saws it, helping His foster-father. O happy earth! which did soak up the sweat that fell from the brow of Jesus while He worked. O lukewarm idlers!

what have we done for God, for heaven, for our own souls and the souls of our neighbors?

When Adam, the father of the human race, learned from God that he must in the sweat of his brow till the soil, which would only yield him thorns and thistles, and that he must eat his bread in toil and cares, he submitted himself with great obedience to the divine commands by putting his hand to the plow and patiently tilling the earth, in hunger and thirst, cold and heat. Now I will show you, O Christian soul, another but innocent Adam, who, as St. Paul says, was typified by the original Adam, "who is a figure of Him that was to come." (Rom. v. 14.) Behold how this second Adam, for thy sake, and for love of thee, fatigues Himself in the carpenter's workshop! Behold how this new Adam eats His bread, in sweat and labor, in hunger and thirst, in trouble and care! Behold and consider how He at the same time laid hold of the plow (which is a symbol of the cross) to purify therewith the earth, that was cursed through sin, from the thorns and thistles! O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, my Redeemer, how often wast Thou exhausted and worn out with work for me! how beautifully and truly has the royal prophet prophesied of Thee: "I am poor, and in labors from my youth." (Ps. lxxxvii. 16.) About this a father of the Church says: "Behold, the good Lord never ceases to labor until the day of His death. For this He desired to be born between an ox and an ass, because they are the most hard-working animals, to show us how much He loved work and the workingman; and for this reason He overlooked the princes and the great ones of the earth, and caused His birth to be announced first of all to the shepherds and tillers of the soil."

"The reason," says the pious Gerson, "why the Sacred Heart of Jesus did not choose a man of high rank, a prince, but rather a poor mechanic, a carpenter, for His father, is that in the workshop the cross and the other instruments of His Passion should be continually before His eyes."

O good Jesus, who would not, in contemplating this, admire the obedience, the patience, and the humility of Thy Most Sacred Heart? Instead of enjoying the highest honors and pleasures of this earth, behold, Thou didst, for my sake, become obedient even unto death upon the cross; Thou didst choose ignominy rather than honor, poverty instead of treasures, cares instead of pleasures, sorrow instead of joy, yes, even the ignominious death of the cross;

and so as to have the cross before Thy eyes during the thirty years, Thou choosest a carpenter for Thy foster-father. O boundless love! O infinite goodness of Thy Sacred Heart. I am ashamed, O Jesus, when I look in my heart and see how disobedient and refractory it has been to Thy divine commandments, to Thy inspirations, and to the commands of my lawful superiors. I repent of my indolence and my rebellious will, and I humbly beg forgiveness for my former errors, and Through the merits of Thy Most Sacred and Most Obedient Heart I pray that Thou wouldst grant me a heart that shall obey Thy divine commandments in every particular. Grant my prayer, O Jesus!

O beloved souls, who have been delivered with the awful price of the most precious blood, open your eyes: "Behold, I set forth in your sight this day a blessing and a curse: A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God: a curse, if you obey not the commandments of the Lord your God." (Deut. xi. 26, 27.) Be obedient, therefore, and you will be sure of salvation. Amen.

THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS, ALTHOUGH EXCEEDINGLY MEEK, STILL IS VERY ZEALOUS FOR THE HONOR OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER IN THE TEMPLE.

"Make not the house of my Father a house of traffic."—John ii. 16.

SYNOPSIS.—Whereas God usually sent one of His angels to inflict punishment upon offenders, Our Lord took the chastisement of the venders and money-lenders in His own hands. This fact should demonstrate to us how greatly He is displeased at those who assail His Church, and should impress upon us that His dignity demands greatest reverence of those assembled in the house of God. Examples: Solomon, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, the widow's mites. How Christians sin in this regard.

Who would not be astonished when considering the exceeding great zeal which inflamed the Heart of Jesus as He grasped a scourge, and alone, against so many, drove out the crowd of tradespeople, with their sheep and oxen, from their temple at Jerusalem, upset the tables of the money-changers, and thereby abruptly terminating their whole business! Owing to His holy zeal the countenance of the meek Jesus began to be illuminated as if by lightning,

so that at sight of Him not one of the offenders dared to murmur, but every one of them, as if struck by lightning, deserted his wares and flew from the sight of God's wrath. The disciples remembered this fervor and zeal of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and after His glorious resurrection they spoke about it among themselves (John ii. 17), thereby recalling the prophecy of the royal Psalmist, where it says: "The zeal of thy house has eaten me up." (Ps. lxviii. 10.)

Why, O most benign Lord, did Thy Heart so burn within Thee, and why didst Thou not disdain to take vengeance in this manner upon these spoilers of the temple? Was this not beneath Thy dignity and Thy divine majesty? Why didst Thou not charge the angels to drive out these ungodly people from the Temple, and to chastise them as they deserved? Thou didst once cast Lucifer, the first offender, from heaven into hell, by Michael, the leader of the heavenly hosts. Thou didst drive Adam out of Paradise by a cherub armed with a fiery sword. Thou didst annihilate the five cities in the valley of the Jordan, the first-born of the Egyptians, and Pharao by an angel. Thou didst chastise David when he sinned, and the entire army of Sennacherib by an angel. Why didst Thou not here charge an angel to punish?

St. Vincent Ferrer gives us the reason by saying: "In order to show how greatly those displease Him who assail His Church, He does not command an angel to punish them, but punishes these blasphemers Himself with His own hand; and also to impress upon His followers how greatly they should reverence the holy places and the temple where God Himself takes up His abode." "The Church," to use the words of St. Chrysostom, "is neither a hairdressers' shop, nor a perfumers', nor a workshop. It is a place for the angels, the abode of God, Heaven itself."

That which is holy must be held in proper esteem. The temple of the Lord is holy; it is God's edifice, God's dwelling. "But if any man violate the temple of God: him shall God destroy." (I. Cor. iii. 17.)

When God appeared to Solomon the second time, He said to him: "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, which thou hast made before me. I have sanctified this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever: and my eyes and my heart shall be there always." (III. Kings ix. 3.) Remember, the eyes of God are in the temple; they notice and behold everything, and that what they have seen will count for or against us on the day of judgment.

"The altar is filled with mysteries," says St. Chrysostom, "and the Lamb of God is sacrificed for thee, the Seraphim stand near, . . . and thou dost not blush, thou dost not fear, thou art not ashamed, and dost not seek to be reconciled with thy God? The king is present; He comes to dwell among His faithful, and thou standest laughing before His eyes, and thinkest little of thy levity? Dost thou not see how those who are in the presence of an earthly king are attentive in his service, how motionless they stand before him, without speaking, or looking here and there? Therefore, should we not in the temple lift up our hearts on high, and with great reverence, serve the King of eternity, the Immortal and Invisible One who from the altar observes our actions?

When Abraham, the prince of the patriarchs, went to sacrifice his only son to God, he ordered, before ascending mount Moria, his two servants who had accompanied him for three days on the journey, to wait at the foot of the mountain until he would return to them, after the accomplishment of the sacrifice. Why did he not permit the animal that had carried the wood, and the two servants, to ascend the mount with him? For no other reason than that they might not hinder him during the sacrifice, or distract his heart from devotion, and because it was not fit for an animal to be present at a holy place, where God Himself, with the host of angels, was present to receive a holy sacrifice which was a prototype of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Let us apply the example to ourselves. In the temples of Almighty God there is no longer offered the blood of rams and oxen, or of sheep, but the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is offered up daily by the hands of the priest, at the altar, as an agreeable sacrifice to God. Oh, what reverence must be expected of us here in the presence of God! What purity and fervor of heart on the part of the sacrificing priest as well as on the part of Christians who assist at this sacrifice! Divest yourself of every earthly thought, distraction, or business, and say to them, with Abraham, as often as you enter the temple: "Remain here; I will go and worship, and then I will return to you."

If Moses on Mount Horeb was bidden to take off his shoes before approaching the Lord God who was present in the burning bush, how much more must we keep free from all earthly desires and thoughts when present in the temple to worship God? For "Sanctity is becoming to the house of the Lord."

If Joseph of Egypt, when he was led out of his dungeon after having been imprisoned there for two years, was first of all washed, shaved, and arrayed in clean garments before he was allowed to appear before King Pharao and his court, how much more must we have a pure heart and conscience when offering up our prayers and supplications in the presence of the Almighty, in the palace of the King of heaven! "Before prayer," says Sirach (Eccl. xviii. 23), "prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God." "For it is not sufficient," says St. Bernard, "that our heart prays in the temple, like an empty grindstone, upon which no grain is poured out, but we must pray well, and lift up a pure heart to God." "We should not only pray," says St. Chrysostom, "but we should pray so that we may be heard."

"What is the meaning that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house?" (Jerem. xi. 15.) Are not these words true in our day? Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple after seeking Him diligently for three days. How many Christians, are there not, who lose Jesus anew, but through their own fault, through their vices! The publican obtained forgiveness of God in the temple because he had a contrite and humble heart. "He went down to his house justified" (Luke xviii. 14), says the Evangelist. But how many are there of us who not only neglect to turn their presence in the temple to good account, but even increase, by wilful or thoughtless irreverence, their guilt and punishment! Nowadays many go to church just to see and to be seen, to talk and gossip with one another, to laugh and discuss scandal. "You stand and laugh," says St. Chrysostom, "It would not be surprising if lightning descended upon you, for such behavior deserves immediate death."

A poor widow, as is related by St. Luke, the Evangelist, came into the temple to offer to God her heart and all her belongings. She threw two pennies into the collection box, and, as the divine Saviour Himself tells us, her gift was more precious than that of any one else. But in our time many persons come to church, not to give their heart to God (for their heart is far from Him), but to turn their backs upon Him, and to turn their faces to other people, and their minds to levity.

"Is this house, then, in which my name hath been called upon, in your eyes become a den of robbers? I—I am he: I have seen it, saith the Lord." (Jerem. vii. 8-11.) A great many Christians deserve this reproach, particularly those who make bad confessions,

and even approach the divine banquet with sin-laden consciences. Many persons wonder why God caused the miraculous birth of Christ to be announced to the shepherds by an angel. Eucherius explains this, and tells us: "The reason why the angel announced this message to the shepherds appears to have been that they might not enter the stable incautiously, where the Infant lay. This cave was, owing to the presence of the Son of God, consecrated as a temple; therefore the shepherds must enter this new house of God well prepared, with the right condition of body and soul, so that they might not desecrate it." The three wise men did the same. They entered the house, and, finding the Infant with Mary, His mother, prostrated themselves, and adored Him. Here you have an example how you should enter the temple, and how you should conduct yourself in the presence of the Most High. Offer up your prayers in unity with the intentions which the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus had upon earth, when He prayed to the heavenly Father: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds: and till it come nigh he will not be comforted: and he will not depart till the most High behold." (Ecclus. xxxv. 21.) Amen.

THE MOST SACRED HEART IS EXCEEDINGLY RICH IN MERCY; THERE ALL SINNERS FIND PARDON AND GRACE.

"Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—Matt. xi. 28.

SYNOPSIS.—Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man," rather than the Son of God, to indicate His assuming human nature. His human Heart imparted compassion and tenderness to the other parts of His human body, the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the whole body. So does the divine Heart also impart grace to the members of His mystical body, the church. The gentleness of the Sacred Heart. The Samaritan woman. The intercession of the Sacred Heart. Saul and David.

It is remarkable that the divine Saviour during His stay upon earth used no other name for Himself, than that of "Son of man." In St. Matthew's Gospel alone the divine Redeemer calls Himself by this name twenty-eight times. Why did He not call Himself "Son of God"? St. Cajetan explains that Christ did not call Himself

"Son of God," but "Son of man," in order to emphasize that He was a real man, and that He was giving His whole Heart, and even His life for mankind, because, for this He came into the world, to save mankind, and to offer Himself for their redemption. What boundless, amazing love of this most loving Heart of Jesus, by which it offered itself up for all mankind, and even now breathes grace and mercy towards mankind just as the sun illumines the earth, gives light to the stars above, and imparts to all creatures light, warmth and growth.

Yes, the divine Heart of Jesus is the mystical sun, which does good to all, illumines everything and the rays of His divine mercy are poured out in heaven upon the heavenly spirits, and the souls of the blessed, but also upon the souls of mortals upon earth, not barring even the greatest sinners. From this divine Heart all the members of His most sacred body were inspired with mercy. For proof of this let us peruse the Holy Scriptures.

Observe, O Christian soul, above all, the affectionate eyes of Jesus, how they express the greatest leniency towards wretched souls; ask Matthew, the publican: "Jesus saw a man sitting at the custom house, whose name was Matthew, and He said to him: Follow me, and he rose up and followed Him." Jesus saw Zacheus in the fig tree, and Peter in the courtyard and both as He gazed upon them could not withstand these eyes. "And the Lord turning, looked on Peter, and Peter went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke xxii. 61.) Behold the power of the *eyes* of Jesus!

And His ears, how ready and willing they always were in life to listen to the troubles of miserable mankind. The thief upon the cross had hardly uttered the words: "Lord, remember me," when his petition was already granted: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Now take notice. The penitent thief had not asked for Paradise—in the consciousness of his crime he would never have ventured to ask for it; he only asked that the ears of Jesus would notice the voice of his supplication, and with his humble "remember" he obtained more than he had hoped for.

Consider the *tongue* and the *lips* of Jesus; through them only love and clemency were poured out for all.

Consider His pierced *hands* upon the cross, how benevolent and generous had they been towards all, especially towards the sick and suffering. All they asked of our Lord was that He should lay His hands upon them.

Consider the *feet* of Jesus, contemplate how Magdalene prostrated herself humbly before them, moistened them with her tears, and thereupon obtained forgiveness of her sins.

Consider finally the sacred *body* of Jesus of which the evangelist Luke says: "A virtue went out from him, and he healed all," and this virtue flowed even from the hem of His *garments* and immediately healed the woman who had suffered from an issue of blood for twelve years.

Whence, O Christian soul, came this virtue and clemency which flowed from all the members of Christ's body? Contemplate the divine Heart of Jesus; there you will find the source and origin of all His goodness and grace.

As from the heart of man the other members of his body receive life and strength, so from the Sacred Heart of Jesus flows abundantly all grace and mercy upon the mystical members, which are the faithful. "Because in him it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell." (Coloss. i. 19.)

Who may despair therefore if the Sacred Heart of Jesus is so kind, so gracious, and so compassionate? Approach, O sinner, with perfect confidence and contrition the throne of divine reconciliation, and you will be amazed, and your heart will expand with the immensity of love. Do you doubt the sweetness and clemency of the divine Heart of Jesus? Remember the woman of Samaria whom Jesus met at Jacob's well in Sichar, where after the journey He sat down, fatigued and thirsty, and asked for a drink of water in these words: "Give me to drink." But the woman, displeased at this demand, answered haughtily: "How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman?" You Jews, she meant to say, do not associate with the Samaritans; why then do you come to this well and ask a service at my hands?

You see here the pride and arrogant heart of the Samaritan woman, for she addresses Jesus with "thou," without respect for His dignity which showed itself in His outward appearance. How did the most meek Heart of Jesus behave? It had compassion upon the woman's weakness, and continuing the conversation, He said to her with gentleness and meekness: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John iv.) (By this living water the Lord signified, according to St. Cyril, the grace of the Holy Ghost that washes

the soul from sin as if by water, and cools the heat of passion.) To this kindness of the Lord the pride and insolence of the woman gave way at once. "Sir," she answered, "give me this water;" and from now on she addressed Jesus always as Sir. Whence came such great and sudden change in this bold woman? St. Cajetan says: When she heard the kind answer of Jesus, she began to reverence Jesus; for before she had said, thou, but now Sir. Contemplate here the meekness and the compassion of the Heart of Jesus, which, like the sun, rises upon the good and the bad, and despises no class of men, but invites them all to come to Him, with the words: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

Sacred history tells us, that Saul collected an army to take David prisoner in the desert and to kill him. David hearing of this arose in the night and accompanied by Abisai entered secretly into Saul's tent and found him sleeping, and his spear stuck in the ground at his head. Then Abisai said to David: "I will run him through with my spear even to the earth at once; and there shall be no need of a second time." But David replied that on no account was Saul to be killed: "The Lord be merciful unto me, that I extend not my hand upon the Lord's anointed! But now take the spear which is at his head, and the cup of water; and let us go." (I. Kings xxvi. 7, 11.)

And they did so. Why did David not kill his enemy after God had delivered him into his hands? David is the prototype of Christ, who said of Himself: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. xi. 29.) But Saul, who persecuted David unjustly, is the image of the sinner. Abisai signifies the divine justice which is provoked and ready to run the sinner through with the spear of eternal perdition, and destroy body and soul. But the most meek and gentle Heart of Jesus does not allow this, saying: "Upon no account shall the sinner die. I desire not the death of the sinner, for he is an anointed of the Lord," that is to say redeemed with my blood, and "the Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save. (Luke ix. 56). For this reason, I permitted my side to be opened with the spear, that he might have free access to my Heart. And if this my boundless love does not move him to return and to repent, I will oblige him to enter there, for there is still room in this divine Heart: I will take away his weapon and his cup of water, that is, the health of his body, his earthly pos-

sessions, and the lusts of the flesh, through which he formerly persecuted me like Saul, so that he may know his sins, and find grace and life." "O man," exclaims St. Bernard, "who would not love this Heart, which is so sorely wounded? who that is so loved, would not love in return?"

St. Mechtildis once saw a most beautiful virgin, surrounded by a wonderful brilliancy, step out of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus crucified; in her right hand she held a diamond, which she frequently dropped into the open side of the Redeemer, and bathed it in the blood and water of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. St. Mechtildis was astonished at this sight, and when she asked the divine Saviour for its meaning, she heard the divine voice from heaven which said to her: "By this beautiful virgin is signified the love of God for mankind; the diamond is the symbol of the heart of man, which, though hardened indeed, gains at last light, and the luster of virtue when bathed in the most precious blood of Jesus Christ."

O sinners! if until now your hearts were hard like the diamond, do penance, and wash your souls in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in the blood of the Lamb. Come hither, all you who are troubled, here is rest for your souls. Amen.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A WELL OF LIVING WATERS IN WHICH THE SINFUL SOUL FINDS GRACE AND SALVATION.

"Give me to drink."—John iv. 7.

SYNOPSIS.—The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well the type of the sinful soul. Jesus thirsting for our salvation. He offers in His Sacred Heart the fountain of the waters of life to sinful souls. Mardochai's dream of the fountain that grew into a river and into a sun the prototype of the Sacred Heart, from which flows the spring of grace and salvation. The story of the healing of the man born blind. The pool of Siloe, wherein this man cleansed himself from sickness, signifies the Sacred Heart, in which the soul may cleanse itself from the sickness of sin. The waters of the well in which the Blessed Virgin washed the clothes of the divine child, has miraculous powers, likewise the well of St. Peter in Rome, and others, but among all there is none like the true fountain of life, the Sacred Heart.

Let us transport ourselves in spirit to Jacob's well, and contemplate how our divine Saviour, exhausted with the journey, seats Himself

beside the well, while His disciples go into the city to obtain food, and how the Lord requests the Samaritan woman, who had come to the well, to get Him water, with these words: "Give me to drink." O most gentle Jesus! Why does Thy divine Heart thirst? If even the source of salvation thirsts, how may our dry souls be refreshed?

St. John the Evangelist writes: "Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour." (John iv. 6.) To this St. Augustine remarks: "The mysteries are already commencing, for it is not without reason that Jesus is fatigued, not without cause that the power of God is exhausted. He is tired by the journey, and sits down at the well, at the sixth hour. He sits down tired. All this has meaning and signification." And what does it signify? At the sixth hour the Sacred Heart of Jesus thirsts, for at this hour Eve, so tells us St. Chrysostom, transgressed the commandment in Paradise. He thirsted at the sixth hour, the hour, as another saintly writer remarks, at which man sinned, and was driven out of Paradise. He thirsted at the sixth hour, that is the hour, says St. Anthony of Padua, at which Thou, O my Jesus, didst dwell upon the source of mercy—the cross—and in the same way Thy divine Heart thirsted, whilst Thou didst cry out, "I thirst." After what didst Thou thirst? Surely it was the salvation of those, replies the same St. Anthony, for whose redemption Thou didst shed Thy blood. Now we can no longer be surprised that the tired and thirsty Heart of Jesus requested a drink of water from the Samaritan woman. St. Albertus Magnus says: "He thirsted more for the woman's salvation than for the drink of water; and, seated at the well, He led this sinner to salvation in the most wonderful and gentle manner, so that she, who had been vicious and ferocious, became now meek and contrite of heart, a gentle lamb of Christ, and became finally a martyr for the Christian faith, whose holy relics are still preserved in the Basilica of St. Paul at Rome.

O ye thirsty and sinful souls, come also to this living source, to this spring of salvation, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to which St. John says in his secret revelations: "To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Apoc. xxi. 6.) Let us meditate more closely upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the source of salvation.

Small and unimportant was the fountain which Mardochai once saw in a dream, but this fountain soon grew into a river, and was turned into a light, and into the sun, and abounded into many

waters. (Esther x. 6.) What does this strange, mysterious dream of Mardochai signify? How can water turn into light and sun? By this little fountain that became a great river we are to understand the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "What is this, O kind Jesus?" exclaims Mallonius, "what is this? Behold, the little fountain of blood enclosed in the Heart of Jesus! And after the lance had opened His side, was that fulfilled which God said to Moses: "Strike the rock, and water will flow therefrom; for after the mystical rock—Christ—had been struck with the spear, the little fountain grew into a river."

Again, how could the river of this precious blood and water which flowed from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, be turned into light and sun? Have you never seen the sun reflected in a clear stream, on the pure waters of a river, how it imparted its image to the waters by the reflection of its rays, and formed another sun, so that the spring itself seemed to be a shining sun?

Look at the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There you have not only the source of all grace and every good, but you have a mystical sun that sends forth its rays of grace in every direction, and to the furthermost parts of the world in the most miraculous manner. O how miraculous, how rich in graces is this fountain of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus! O men, come, come, hasten to this divine fountain! Let not the words of Scripture apply to you: "For my people have done two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jerem. ii. 13.)

It is quite suitable and instructive in this place to remember the story of the healing of the man who was born blind, whose eyes the kind Jesus touched with dust and spittle, ordering him to go to the pool of Siloe, and there to wash his eyes with fresh water, whereupon he would see. O good Jesus, who would not wonder at this unusual way of divine curing? Couldst Thou not have given sight to this blind man by a simple word? Why didst Thou send him to the pool of Siloe? St. Gregory the Great says: "Every act of Christ serves for our instruction." This man born blind is the human race, which, by the sin of Adam, is blind from birth. Jesus saw this blind man and had compassion upon him, and in His mercy delivered him from his affliction, and how did He do this? He sent this blind man to the pool of Siloe, which, according to the holy Fathers, was a prototype of Christ crucified. "Christ," says Cornelius à Lapide, "is Siloe; that is to say, the fountain of living water that flows into

eternal life," for when He permitted His Sacred Heart to be opened upon the cross, the source of all grace and blessing was opened up to the human race, of which divine fountain the prophet Zacharias says: "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner." (Zach. xiii. 1.) Christian soul, who art blind and a sinner, imitate this blind man who, with the greatest joy, hastened to the fountain of grace, and if, like him, you are despised by the Pharisees and Scribes for your devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and laughed at, do not grieve, for in this wholesome pool you can be cleansed not only from the filth of your sins, but you will also obtain the enlightenment of grace. "Christ will enlighten thee." (Eph. v. 14.) Because of Him, the Psalmist says: "For with thee is the fountain of life: and in thy light we shall see light." (Ps. xxxv. 10.) Listen to St. Thomas: If we desire to be cleansed from our blindness of heart, we must be washed spiritually, as Isaias tells us in these words: "Wash, cleanse yourselves." There is no more wholesome bath for the soul than the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Herein, wash yourselves then, in the blood of the Lamb, who says of Himself: "To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Apoc. xxi. 6.) That well in Egypt wherein the Mother of God washed the clothes of the divine Child is, to this day, held in great veneration by Christians as well as by Mahometans. Its waters cure in the most miraculous way many sicknesses. St. Peter's fountain at Rome, which sprang in a miraculous manner out of the Mamertine rock at the foot of the Capitol so that St. Peter could baptize the Roman soldiers who were converted to Christ, is also famous, and even to this day there flows a healing water from this fountain.

There are many other miraculous fountains, but there is one which, without comparison, surpasses all the others, namely, the fountain of life: the Sacred and divine Heart of Jesus.

Ask that disciple who reposed upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus, what he drew from this divine fountain. "Rivers of wisdom," says the Venerable Bede, so that he could say: "In the beginning was the Word." O happy disciple! Who can comprehend the incomparable sweetness which thou didst then drink in from the most amiable Heart of Jesus!

St. Bernard mentions five fountains of the Redeemer: The first he calls the fountain of mercy; the second, the fountain of wisdom;

the third, the fountain of grace; the fourth, the fountain of love; and the fifth, which is the Sacred side and Heart of Jesus, he calls the fountain of life, in which we are not only cleansed from sin, but born again to a new life. "From this fountain," says St. Ambrose, "there flows, not the corruption of death, but the source of life everlasting." O men, why do you drink of the inebriating filthy waters of worldly pleasures? Why do you forsake the fountain of life eternal?

An abundant fountain of grace is God, the crucified, the Eucharistic, and especially His Sacred Heart, whence flows the source of all graces and blessings. How beautifully the Lord says through Ezechiel: "I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness." (Ezech. xxxvi. 25.) And let us conclude with the words of St. Ambrose, who says: "There flowed from out His side water and blood whereby we might be cleansed, and drink salvation." Amen.

"I AM THE DOOR. IF ANY ONE ENTER BY ME, HE SHALL BE SAVED."

John x. 9.

SYNOPSIS.—The side door in Noe's Ark, which offered an entrance to safety to all who would escape from destruction by the deluge, is a type of the wound in the Holy side of our Lord, through which we may enter the Sacred Heart, the salvation of all who would escape from the destruction of sin. At the gates of Paradise an angel stands with flaming sword, to forbid entrance; not so at the Sacred Heart. There entrance is open to all. The ladder leading to Heaven in Jacob's vision a type of the cross and the Sacred Heart.

When the whole human race turned away from God, and was steeped in sin and vice, the just God determined to wipe the whole human race from the face of the earth, with the exception of Noe and his family. Therefore God commanded Noe to build an ark of wood, in which he and his family and part of the animal world (two of each kind), should be saved. Noe went to work and made the ark according to the orders of God, with three divisions, and one door on the side.

According to the opinion of St. Augustine, Jesus Christ crucified,

our Redeemer, is represented by the ark, and the sacred wound in His side, particularly His Sacred Heart, by the door at the side; "the door," he writes, "which was at the side of Noe's ark, is in fact that wound made when the side of Christ crucified was pierced by the lance." For as Noe and his family were saved by entering through that door into the ark, whilst the rest who did not enter perished miserably, so will those who enter into the sweetest Heart of Jesus crucified, with a lively faith and contrite heart, be safe from the deluge of eternal damnation, whilst those who refuse in this life to enter in at this door of life in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, will perish miserably. After banishing our first parents, God placed at the gates of Paradise, a Cherub with a fiery sword, to guard the path to the tree of life. What Paradise was to our first parents, the Sacred and divine Heart of Jesus is to us in the new law, but there is no Cherub with a flaming sword to prohibit the entrance to strangers, this door of Paradise stands open to all, no one, not even the lowest is excluded. For this reason the Lord desired to be laid in the sight of all in the crib; this is why He associated with all mankind, and suffered within view of all upon a mountain outside the gates of Jerusalem, and allowed the door of His heart to be opened with a lance, that all might find free entrance there. How appropriate are here the words of the Prophet: "This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it." (Ps. cxvii. 20.)

Christian soul! is not the door of life, and the gate of salvation opened to thee, by the lance of the soldiers? Why then dost thou hesitate or fear to approach the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, even though it be surrounded by thorns? "Open ye to me the gates of justice," thus prays the royal poet, in the 117th Psalm (19 verse): "I will go into them, and give praise to the Lord." What does this door of justice signify other than the Most Sacred, wounded and opened Heart of Jesus crucified, in which dwells justice in as much as the satisfaction which it accomplished has reconciled the heavenly Father. "Behold," says the venerable P. Ambrose Spinola, "what He has done and suffered for thee! He opened to thee His heart, that you might behold how much it has already spent itself for the sake of thy salvation, that you might see with what love He has always loved thee, and that thereby you might have confidence to enter into the wound of this burning heart, after having torn thyself away from the turmoil of the world." Holy Writ relates of the Patriarch Jacob, that when he saw that wonderful ladder, the top

of which reached into heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending, and also saw the Lord Himself standing upon the ladder as if He were holding it that they might not fall therefrom, he exclaimed with surprise: "This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of Heaven" (Gen. xxviii, 17.) Herein is hidden a great mystery. The ladder is the cross of the Lord, by means of which Christ Himself and all the elect ascend to the heavenly home. The Lord who leaned upon the ladder, is, according to Cornelius à Lapide, Christ hanging upon the cross, nailed to it with both hands, holding this ladder for us, that we may the more easily ascend to Him. By heaven opened we understand the Most Sacred and divine Heart of Jesus crucified, which has become the door of salvation for all, and the sure gate of heaven: "Verily, this is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven!"

To this the divine Saviour seems to have alluded when in John (x, 9) He says: "I am the door. If any one enter by me, he shall be saved, and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures:" and he shall have life, and he will have it in abundance, here by grace, there by glory. O Christian soul! consider well what a kind Master thou hast, so that you may say truly: "The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture," (Ps. xxii, 1), "for the Lord offers thee His most Sacred and amiable Heart not only as food, but also as the door of eternal life. Enter now through this door by devout meditation, so that you may find in the same an everlasting dwelling place.

Great respect is shown for a sacred door, preserved at Rome, which once belonged to Pilate's palace at Jerusalem, and through which the true King of Israel, the divine Saviour, entered several times during His passion. Another sacred door held in high esteem is the one of the Vatican at Rome, which every Jubilee year is opened with great solemnities by the Pope, and closed again at the end of the Jubilee. Through this door the faithful often crawl upon their knees into the sanctuary, there to gain the plenary indulgence.

But much holier, more venerable is that door of true life, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, of which St. Augustine says: "Longinus opened for me the side of Christ with the lance, I entered there, and rested safe in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus." The high priest used to enter into the Holy of Holies by a door made of olive wood, "and in the entrance of the oracle he made little doors of olive tree."

(3 Kings vi, 31.) The olive tree is a type of peace and mercy, and for this reason, according to the opinion of St. Ambrose, while all other trees were destroyed by the flood, the olive tree alone was preserved by God, and Noe's dove broke off this tree the green branch as a sign of peace and mercy.

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus! Thou art truly that door of olive wood. The door of peace and mercy. Whosoever enters this door with a devout and contrite heart will find abundant pasture, and possess eternal life.

O may then all enter into this door of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, for there is room for all, even for the most miserable and despairing sinner.

Christian soul! Why art thou sorrowful? Thou hast a place of refuge in the Sacred Heart of Jesus crucified; there thou wilt find a sure protection in all your trials, in persecutions, and dangers, in vexations and temptations. "Enter thou into the rock, and hide thee in the pit, from the face of the fear of the Lord," writes Isaias (ii, 10), which means: Fly to Christ; hide thyself in the wounds of Christ!

O Christian souls! there is a place of rest for you all in the Most Sacred Heart; why do you seek shadows? Go to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it." (Ps. cxvii, 20.) Amen.

16077